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FATHER MATURIN

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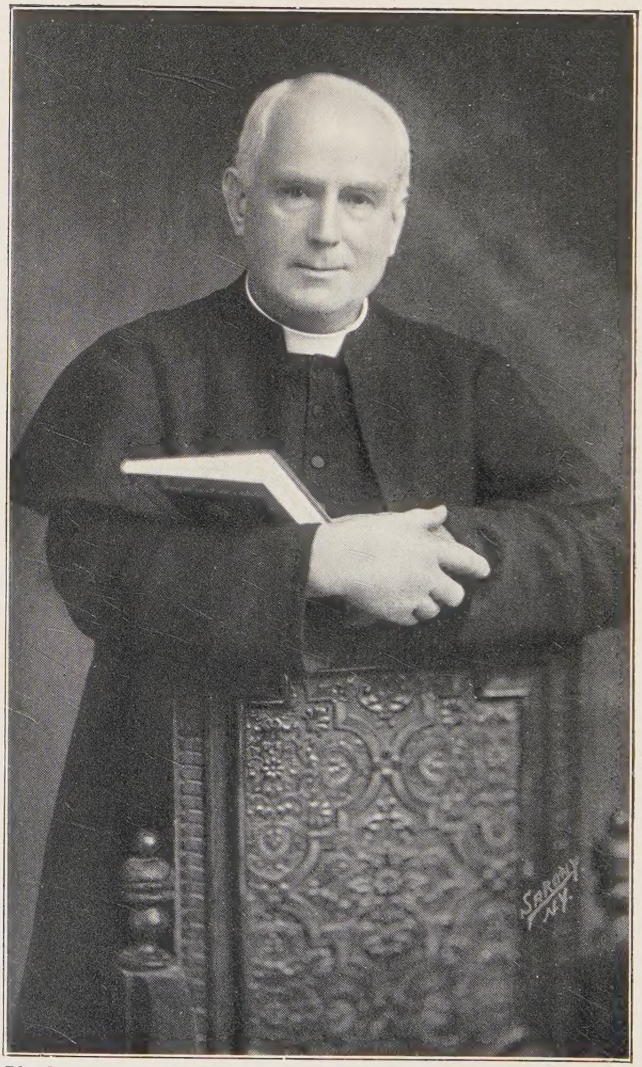

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LAST PORTRAIT OF FATHER MATURIN. NEW YORK, 1915.

FATHER MATURIN

A MEMOIR

WITH SELECTED LETTERS

MAISIE WARD

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PREFATORY NOTE

The arrangement of the letters that form the second part of this volume has been largely dictated by circumstance. Father Maturin left very few letters of biographical interest. Those which he did leave have been made use of in the Memoir. On the other hand, the number of letters of counsel and spiritual help is comparatively large, and of these the greater part of this volume consists. The owners of many of these letters did not wish their names to be mentioned, and it has seemed best on the whole to publish the entire selection without giving the names of any of Father Maturin's correspondents. It was impossible to follow any exact chronological order in the arrangement of the letters. It would have been a real loss in grouping them to have sacrificed sequence in subject to sequence in date. The only exception made has been in the case of the letters to any one person which form a series, and these have been placed in the order in which they were written.

It must be remembered in reading these letters that they are personal letters, many of them written to intimate friends, often hastily, amid press of work. A man's letters are only his own to alter and correct —this work cannot be done by an editor. Where handwriting has proved almost impossible to read an occasional word has had to be guessed, and when

this has been done square brackets have been used as an indication. Where slips of the pen were obvious the grammar of a sentence has sometimes been amended. In places, too, where the meaning was really obscure, a few lines have been left out. But for the rest the letters must be read as they were written, not as finished essays, but often as hasty jottings in which an occasional phrase can only be rightly understood by being read in its relation to the whole letter. *Taken as a whole*, the letters may safely be claimed as witnessing to a rare depth of thought, vigour of mind, and force of conviction. But it must be emphasised that, even more than in the case of most men, the quotation of isolated sentences from these letters would fail signally to do justice to Father Maturin's meaning.

It only remains for me to offer my sincerest thanks to Monsignor Nolan for his invaluable help in revising the proof-sheets of this book; to Bishop Hall, Canon Hogan, and others of Father Maturin's friends for sending me their recollections; and, lastly, to the Rev. Charles Maturin, without whose continued kindness and goodwill the brief Memoir could never have been written.

MAISIE WARD.

LOTUS, DORKING.
February 1920.

FRONTISPIECE

LAST PORTRAIT OF FATHER MATURIN. New York, 1915.
(*Photograph by Sarony, New York.*)

FATHER MATURIN

I

A REPROACH frequently brought against Christianity is that it allows only a partial and one-sided development of personality. With its code of restrictions, its exhortations to self-denial, its view of this world as merely a place of testing and preparation for another, it is, we are told, the negation of life in its fullness. One of the most deeply-rooted cravings of humanity is the longing for fullness of life, and in order to attain this every power that is in man needs to be developed to its utmost extent. There must be no negation, but an acceptance of life and all it involves; no setting one part of man's nature in warfare with another, but a simultaneous development of every faculty and every power. Everything natural is therefore right: Christianity is against nature, and has treated as weeds the fairest flowers in nature's garden—has pulled them roughly up and flung them down to die, leaving only a bare plot of earth. And then, perhaps, it has partly filled the plot with 'bedding out,' planting neat rows of orderly virtues instead of the lovely wild growths of untamed nature.

The exponents of this view will point, perhaps, to two characters as typical: the 'earnest Christian' engaged in good works, strenuous and self-denying, but blind to the beauty of nature, contemptuous, perhaps, of the glory of music, art and poetry. They will recall the fact that some of the saints would journey with closed eyes, not to look at nature's loveliness. In a less crude form, indeed with a certain kindly patronage, their attitude towards the martyr for religious conviction is essentially that of a beef-eater I remember at the Tower. In showing the place of imprisonment and death of the Venerable Philip Howard he simply said, 'Philip 'Oward, Earl of Arundel, starved himself to death 'ere.' This was indeed all he could see of the worn figure of the martyr, kneeling on the stones of his prison, consumed with the double fire of love of faith and of country, wearing out his life, when he might have been developing all sides of his personality at the Court of Queen Elizabeth.

And then there is the other type, which has certainly a great charm and completeness, for as Cardinal Newman once said, 'It is ever easier to excel in one thing than in two.' This type is largely the one chosen by ancient Greece. The body is tended and developed to the highest possible perfection, the mind is cultured and ready, the perfection of manners makes life smooth, and the only moral precept is that of kindness to all around. This, indeed, can only be carried out in so far as it does not clash with the necessary development of the personality, but up to this point it is made to hold a large place—it holds, indeed, the place of religion. Religion as Christians understand

it is generally absent, but if present at all, it is only as a means to the end of general kindliness ; good taste dictates that if "the element of religion is not wholly lacking," at least it must not be "insisted upon."

There is perhaps only one way in which this modern attitude of mind, often unconscious, but almost always present, can be met and altered, and that is by encountering a complete and rich personality wholly possessed by the Christian ideal. To any one who knew the late Father Maturin, the suggestion that his was a narrow or stunted character, lacking in vitality, would seem simply an absurdity. He abounded in humour and sympathy and intellectual vigour. To hear him preach was to be caught up and swept along by a torrent of ideas. His words poured out, falling over one another and tripping up in their haste to be uttered. He had one gesture—peculiar, I think, to himself—of seeming to snatch the words as they came to his lips and to throw them from him, as if speech were too slow a means of expression.

In many of his letters may be seen the same impetuosity. He dashes at his subject headlong, so that he often leaves out a part of what he wants to say and then abruptly returns to it. This defect is very prominent in what is perhaps his deepest book, 'The Price of Unity.' The lack of artistic form is especially noticeable, because he had in so many ways the mind and temperament of an artist. He responded instantly to the appeal of beauty in music, poetry, or nature ; and one could often trace in his preaching the effect of some recent experience. He would get up to preach. his mind vibrating from

the latest influence that had played upon it, and he translated that touch into poetry of speech.

But most of all, he was affected by contact with other minds. Sometimes those who talked with him found an apparent want of response at the moment, an inability to give them, as it seemed, the help they sought. But when he was in the pulpit it was otherwise; then his words would go straight to the mind of the one who needed them. One instance of this I remember in the case of a lady who had been an agnostic for years. She went to see Father Maturin, and came away saying that he could not help her—that it was no use hoping for help from anyone. She had built much on meeting him, and she was thoroughly depressed and discouraged. That same evening she came, however, to hear him preach, and after the evening service was over she went into the sacristy and asked how quickly it was possible for her to be received into the Church. All the difficulties he had seemed unable to solve when she laid them before him Father Maturin had answered in his sermon.

If one man feels a difficulty it is probable that many others have felt the same; and from intercourse with many and various minds Father Maturin drew that knowledge that made his touch in preaching so sure and so unfailing. All his life he was studying men, and to a rare psychological insight he added a depth of human sympathy that made his words go home to all who heard them. Monsignor Benson used to tell the story of a young man who, after hearing Father Maturin preach, came to him full of wrath, saying: 'All that I told you was in the strictest confidence. How could you repeat it to Father

Maturin!' Monsignor Benson assured him most solemnly that he had not repeated a word. 'But you must have told him. He knew all about me; he preached *at* me the entire time.' And Monsignor Benson had the greatest difficulty in persuading his friend that he had not betrayed his confidence.

This imaginative sympathy with the difficulties of others was so great that it sometimes startled men of narrower mind, and one pious critic was heard to say, 'I don't like Father Maturin's sermons. He always says things like "Some people say there is no God, and there's a great deal to be said for that theory."' The critic perhaps thought that this was a new method, forgetting the words of the Summa of St. Thomas: 'Is there a God? Apparently not.'

To Father Maturin it seemed, as to St. Thomas, and again to Cardinal Newman, that he could not hope to win his opponent unless he could first show a realisation of his point of view. But it was not only or chiefly on theory that he so acted. It was an instinctive necessity—he saw into his hearers' minds so clearly that he was hampered in putting out his own view until he had dealt with theirs, and got it, so to speak, out of the way.

In many ways Father Maturin's mind was a very modern one. He read omnivorously, and would come down to breakfast full of the most intense sympathy with the hero or heroine of the novel of the hour. He loved to discuss the book, and would make every allowance of heredity and environment, longing to stretch a point in interpreting the moral law, so as to find an excuse for a character who had touched his heart. Although he could at times

become extremely irritated with a book or person, he was in general far readier to admire than to criticise.

He loved thrills, and would lie awake shivering over a ghost story. He had a wonderful collection of these, some invented by himself, which he told to child friends to their terrified enjoyment. And then suddenly, at the end of a shiver of horror, they would see a smile broadening on his face and some absurd anti-climax would follow. I well remember a ghastly story of murder and haunting, and of a woman carrying the finger of her victim in a small black bag; and just when she opened the bag Father Maturin would 'wake with a start.' He would sit in an arm-chair in his rather untidy cassock twinkling with laughter or shivering with a terror not altogether simulated on those evenings of story-telling. All the same stories had to be told time after time—all the silly jokes that formed a sort of ritual gone over; but through it all we had a respect for him that made us treasure the deep sayings that came sometimes in the midst of all the nonsense. It was the nonsense of one light-hearted as a schoolboy—so transparently light-hearted that one could see down below the fun into clear depths of delight and wisdom. As examples of the excellent fooling in which he often delighted let me quote two letters written to a girl friend. The first is an answer to one written to him from a convent where she was making a short stay after having a gay time in London:

Downside Abbey: March 31, 1910.

What a beautiful thought to write to me from the convent! To me in my humble cell—four bare walls,

bare floor, two bare tables, bare bed, and very bare chairs—the letter came redolent of the beautiful spiritual atmosphere in which it was written. I could see you writing it, with the life of St. Theresa open beside you, laid aside just for the moment while you sat by the open casement and anon lifted your eyes to the veiled figure of a nun telling her beads in the Convent Garth.

Sunday.—I was cut short in the midst of some very beautiful thoughts, the train of which has been broken, and the peaceful scene in the convent broken in upon and wrecked. I hope you had a nice time in Cambridge and enjoyed it *much* more than your time in London; the quiet of the convent and the edifying conversation of the nuns in their gentle voices must have been a real refreshment after that trying time in the noisy, dusty, restless world.

We are having beautiful weather here if it were not for, I think, the very coldest wind I ever felt, which has been blowing steadily from the North Pole ever since I came here. I am afraid all these expeditions to the North Pole, and all the talk about it, has done a great deal of harm and made it really exceedingly unpleasant. . . .

The other letter refers to a long-standing joke about a Retreat that was to be organised on a new and, I am afraid, rather frivolous system. We were to include in the daily programme rides, dances, and other diversions for the retreatants, and carefully to exclude any morbidly serious element. Father Maturin writes with mock solemnity:

As to your important letter of August 17 about the 'Retreat of the Future,' I have filed it and given it

careful consideration. I think in future any letters on that subject should be written on gilt-edged paper ; for myself, I should prefer them to be written on vellum—to be preserved for posterity as a turning-point in the religious movement of the twentieth century. I think the 27th April would be a good day to begin on, as I see by my Catholic diary that that is the feast of St. Thuribius of Mongrovio. I suggest this day for obvious reasons which I need scarcely go into. I will mention one or two :

(1) We know nothing about him, therefore no one can say he would not approve of the lines upon which we propose to act. If we take him as our patron and say we are sure it is just what he would have wished, it cannot be reasonably contradicted ; indeed, I think we might go so far as to say we are following as closely as possible the lines we are sure were dear to his heart. If anyone denies it we can demand proofs.

(2) Then, too, I think it would be impossible to prove that when he went into Retreat himself privately, which I am sure he did, his Retreats were not largely conducted on these principles. At any rate, we must demand of our opponents proof to the opposite—reasonableness must be the key-note of all our dealings with our opponents.

(3) Then I am told that in one of the old Indian dialects, of which there are no remains or even traditions extant, a word beginning with the letters M-O-N meant beauty, and another beginning with the letters G-R-O-V, though I grant not in that order, meant quiet, retirement, or an oak-tree, which obviously means the peace of a forest. So here we have the very thing—a Retreat, or time of quiet, conducted on the principles of beauty. Now, as there are no records of the language extant, it will be obviously impossible to prove that the words do not mean what I assert they do. We must

appeal for proofs, reasonable proofs, from our opponents, and if they are so foolish as to say our assertions are not reasonable, we fall back at once upon faith and charge them with modernism, and here we have all the authorities with us—we are quite unassailable. Why not boldly call it ' The Retreat of St. Thuribius of Mongrovio ' ?

P.S.—Please file this letter as No. 76. It will make the subject more interesting to posterity if they believe some of the documents lost. They will probably search the British Museum for them.

This reasoned way of treating utter nonsense was wonderfully characteristic. In talk it would be carried on until suddenly silence fell—and looking at Father Maturin we would see that laughter had become tears, and he was speechless from the enjoyment of his own jokes !

II

It has been suggested that the realisation of such a personality as that of Father Maturin helps to a certain extent to refute the notion so prevalent to-day that a believer in the traditional dogmas of Christianity is narrow, one-sided, cramped by the armour of faith he has put on and wherein he trusts.

In one field of art especially the critics who draw such a picture have had a particularly free hand. It would be hard to count the novels that in recent years have depicted a vicarage education as producing either hopeless narrowness or a spirit of wild revolt. Either the stunting and dwarfing spirit of Christianity

uncritically accepted makes the boy censorious, humourless, and incapable of a broad and sane outlook, or the same spirit rebelled against makes for bitterness and misery at home. The only escape is an escape from the restraints of dogma, the only cleric at all helpful to the young and struggling spirit is one whose own mind, although Christ-like—that word is seldom spared—is very free from its chains.

Basil Maturin's early years were passed in a vicarage in which many distinctively Catholic dogmas were taught and accepted without question. His father's was the rare, at that date almost unique, position of a Tractarian clergyman in Ireland.

Dr. Maturin [writes the Rev. C. E. Osborne] represented the old Tractarian type in its nobility of character, its high purpose, its stern reality, its clear and logical unworldliness. He made no concession to the 'modern spirit' in any form. . . . The vicar of Grangegorman lived in the world of the Caroline Divines, the nonjurors, and the Tractarians. . . .[1]

His children, far from rebelling against home influences, were all at one with their father. It is often the mark of a large and generous character to be able to accept and carry on tradition in a family, especially in early youth, when the tendency is to be looking out for one's own line. It is also a testimony to width and sympathy in parents never to have aroused the spirit of contradiction incidental to youth at every date. In the Maturin family there seems to have

[1] *Life of Dolling*, pp. 30–31.

been a very beautiful looking up to their father, and a keen sense of tradition in carrying on his work. Three of the brothers became clergymen, two sisters nuns. All joined to a vivid appreciation of the best in life a devoted adherence to the traditional creed.

This family of ten children never knew even the ordinary separations that mark the lives of most families, however closely united. They never left home for their education, but went daily to a school in Dublin. The Grangegorman vicarage was just outside the city and had a large rambling garden. Games in the garden and long country walks were the chief pleasures of the children, and they never sought or desired companionship outside their own home circle—a circle which was never broken until, arrived at the age of manhood, the sons left home to enter upon their various careers in life. One of Father Maturin's brothers, describing this home life, said that he believed its chief drawback lay in the fact that friendships are most easily made in youth, and that so close and retired a family life may lead to great loneliness in later years. 'But,' he added, 'we were very happy.' And I think that in Father Maturin's case his great genius for friendship led him to renew with other families something of that free and happy intercourse that he had known at home in his youth. He remained always so young in spirit that he could enter upon new and close intimacies almost to the threshold of old age.

Canon Hogan, for many years Dr. Maturin's curate, writes with vivid remembrance of those days to one of Father Maturin's sisters:

My earliest recollection of your brother Willie [1] was as one of a crowd of boys and girls who filled All Saints' vicarage with fun and enthusiasm. They were always ready to try the new curate with hard questions! Willie would thrust a schoolbook into my hand and ask for an interpretation, more for the fun of the thing than from any serious desire to be assisted. He was then at school, and in process of time entered college. He was never a student in any real sense, though fond of reading and a devourer of all kinds of books, so he did nothing of account at college, but he was a popular personality, making friends in all directions. He was very fond of society. His first idea was to enter the Army, but he failed in his first exam. for Woolwich, and before he could go up again his ideas of life were completely changed by a severe illness. About the year 1868 scarlet fever broke out in his family; he was very seriously ill, and his brother Arthur died of the fever after a very short illness. This made a great impression on Willie, being the first death in the family, and combined with his own serious illness to completely change his whole outlook on life. He determined to give up the Army and to take Holy Orders, and from this determination he never wavered. He was always fond of music, and often played the organ for the services in his father's church and helped to train the choir.

Willie was never an athlete nor, so far as I know, did he join in the usual activities of young men. But one scene rises to my mind as I write. It was on an occasion when the members of the choir were invited to spend an afternoon with the Maturin family at Bray.

[1] B. W. Maturin was always known to his family as Willie, while a younger brother, also christened Basil, was called by that name.

We gathered together in a field near the house, and were presently engaged in a vigorous game of '*Barring Out.*' Here Willie distinguished himself, not merely in the game, but in his kindliest way, making the afternoon pleasant for all the young people. He was familiar with them all, and was commonly known as '*Our Willie.*'

On another occasion, when some friends were invited to tea at the country house which the family occupied, Willie dressed himself as a lady visitor, and sitting near me joined in conversation with such clever 'make believe' that I was on my good behaviour and best manners, when suddenly he uttered a loud guffaw and threw off his mask with a hearty laugh!

I mention these incidents as illustrating his boyish fun and readiness to play—and he was the soul of every party.

About 1870 he was ordained deacon, and went as curate to Peterstow, in Herefordshire, under Dr. Jebb, an old friend of his father's. In due time he received priest's Orders. His public life practically began then, as he had never lived away from home before this. He had come quite fresh from a very sheltered home, and the moral conditions of this agricultural village seemed to him to be in a very deplorable state, especially to one coming from Ireland. He worked there untiringly for two or three years, making a great impression on the parish and bringing many to the Sacraments. This time in his life was one of comparative quiet, as the parish was small. He had much time for thought and prayer, he kept all the canonical hours, and his spiritual life grew and deepened.

It would be difficult to obtain material for any complete biography of Father Maturin from the letters

which have been preserved. Although there are a considerable number of these, they are in general very little concerned with the events of his own life, but are letters of counsel and help for others. Unfortunately, the letters from America to his family have not been kept, and his life there stretched over a period of nearly ten years. But two groups there are of exceedingly full and interesting letters containing the analysis of all that he went through in the two great crises of his life—his vocation to Cowley at the age of twenty-four, and his submission to Rome nearly twenty-six years later. These letters show that unity of mind and character throughout life which must have struck all who knew him, or who heard or read his sermons. In each group we see the same impetuosity and earnest desire to follow at once the call received, as well as the absolute reasonableness and the readiness both to submit to lawful authority and to counteract his natural impetuosity by the patience of waiting. The early group of letters, however, show no trace of the agony of mind that went before the later decision. The vocation to Cowley involved only the moral submission of a nature singularly at one with itself; the later struggle was the effort of a tired mind to find its way out of the mental fog that has dimmed the clear vision of truth for many of the ablest minds; it involved, too, the misery of uprooting in middle life and of breaking with the tenderest and holiest associations of many years.

The letters written from Peterstow to his home show the close confidence existing between himself and his father, and the happy atmosphere of a perfect

home life. He writes of home plans, the success of country holidays, the future of brothers and sisters. Every little joy or worry is written about and talked over, and home news longed for: 'They write such horridly short letters from home, they're hardly worth reading. Make some of them write a good long letter.' Questions of difficulties in his work, of disagreements with his vicar as to parish matters, are offered for judgment to the father in whose wisdom his confidence was complete.

As with his first desire to become a clergyman, the impulse to a life of still more definite renunciation and devotion came almost suddenly. In 1871 Basil Maturin went into Retreat at Cowley, St. John's, Oxford, whence he wrote to his father the first of the letters that follow. Although he had passed the age of twenty-four, his letters are very much those of a schoolboy—impetuous, often ungrammatical, written only for a father's sympathetic eye, but they give so good an idea of his eagerness and simplicity that they must be quoted at some length:

Mission House, Cowley: October 1871.

My dearest Papa,—I hardly know how to tell you what I am going to write about, or rather to write so as to show you how serious and in earnest I am. I have been in the Retreat at Cowley for nearly the whole of last week, and, to tell the whole thing out plainly, I want to enter Cowley altogether as one of the Brothers. I have thought, as well as I can remember, almost since I first thought of being ordained, at any rate for some time before I was ordained, of doing it at some time; but did not think I should have come so soon till this last Retreat, when I received

a special call. Both Father Benson[1] and Father Grafton, who have had a great deal of experience in people entering the Religious Life, said that they thought I had a call. Father Grafton, whom I really think if you saw you wou'd not doubt, told me he had not the least doubt of it. I told him everything I could think of which I thought might lead him to think I had not ; but everything I said only the more strengthened him in his opinion.

I don't mean to say that I told him hoping I might not have it, but I longed for it so much that I was afraid I might hide anything which might tell against me. But everything I said only made him say the more strongly that he had not the least doubt. . . .

So, my dearest papa, I hope and pray you will not, as I'm sure you will not, prevent my going at once. Father Benson would not allow me to enter even as a novice till I had been about three months staying here first. He wishes me, and I need not say I wish myself, to begin immediately after Xmas. . . .

If I were to put it off and to die before I had been able to come, oh, what an awful loss I should have. If I did not come immediately when God called me, He might not call me again, and then I should have lost all I might have gained for ever. I know you will say God would not withdraw His call if I waited His will; but aren't there many instances of people being called once, and when they did not answer immediately they never were called again ? And then there are so few men, in the Church of England at least, whom God does call, does it not seem almost cruel to Him for those few not to give themselves up with joy and thankfulness that they should be the ones called

[1] Father Benson, S.S.J.E., Superior of Cowley.

by Him to be amongst the hundred and forty-four thousand.

And if He has called me, I have so much of my past to make up for that I could never be too thankful for being selected, because of course I know that, in one sense at least, it is a life of penance. . . .

So you will not ask me to wait another year at Peterstow before I come to try it, for goodness knows what might happen in another year! If I did wait I might have a temptation to some curacy, or something else, to travel abroad, something that I might like very much, and perhaps I should yield to the temptation, and so lose all care for coming here. . . .

Don't think that they have put me up to it here, for indeed they haven't. They never breathed a word about it till I spoke to them, and then only answered my questions. . . .

I shall be twenty-five next February, so that I think I ought to know my own mind. As far as I am concerned myself, I should come to-morrow without the very least hesitation. In fact I think—indeed I feel quite certain—I could not help coming here to try it without committing a great sin, so I hope and pray, my dear papa, you will not say anything to prevent me.

If God has called me oughtn't you to feel very happy that all your care of us has been so rewarded by His calling two of us already?

In a second letter after his return to Peterstow he writes:

I just want to tell you exactly all my feelings about it, and then I think I may promise to be guided entirely by your advice—whether to wait or not. For I know right well that all you want is for me to do what is

right and what God wishes, and it is so hard for one to be sure oneself that there is not some selfish motive or self-will at the bottom, even when one thinks one is doing it only for God.

The first reason that I am so anxious not to delay is that I know I am not like other people. I am so easily distracted. The least thing in the way of going into society or mixing with other people does me so much harm. So that I hardly ever dine out, or go out anywhere that I do not feel the worse for it. I don't know whether it is a right thing to say; but what I always think, and have thought of myself, is that I must be either very good, or utterly careless, and I do feel that all the time I am waiting I do not get on as God would have me. I don't know whether it is a conceited thing to say, but it will explain what I mean :—I feel that I have the power within me, if it was rightly directed, but that I need direction most dreadfully, and require so much Rule . . . and silence, and to be by myself above all. . . .

I don't mean [I want to go] because it would be necessarily the highest life at Cowley, but because it would be the higher life for me. And every day I feel more and more certain that it is what God intended for me—instead of getting less anxious, I think I am getting more and more anxious to go there.

Often when I have been out dining, and had a very pleasant evening, when I come away I feel such a longing to be there that I cannot but think it comes from God—especially when it is not altogether because it is what I like myself. That is what makes me feel sure that it is a call from God and not merely an enthusiasm; for I really don't feel so very enthusiastic about it in itself, only because I feel it is what is for me. . . .

Dr. Maturin wished him, however, to wait a year before going to Cowley, and to this he at once agreed. He wrote again to his father after getting his letter :

One of the chief reasons why I have always thought of entering Cowley is that I have always known and felt that I could not get on in a large town parish, or a parish where there are many gentry. I mean to say that I know it would be the destruction of me to go to such a place, for instance, as Richmond. Although I have been impatient enough in wishing to go there, yet I know I have been most providentially prevented from going. For I know the effect going about and being with people has upon me:—it utterly distracts me, and keeps me from thinking, etc. I even feel this for the short time that I go home at Xmas and summer. But then I don't think that such a feeling as this might mean [I ought] always to stay in a country parish—for I really feel that it does me harm being my own master, as I am here. I feel that I am much too cheeky in my preaching and teaching, and besides that I know very little about the management of a parish and what to do, so that I am sometimes really at my wits' end. . . .

Mind, I don't look forward with feelings of the most perfect happiness at all to going to Cowley, for I know that I shall have to give up a great deal that I am very fond of—for instance, in a great measure grand services, which they have not there, and society. But there are other feelings which we can hardly explain—feelings that I get when I am alone, I mean, almost, if not altogether quite alone, which leave me when I have any company or pleasure. Even having . . . here in the summer, which I enjoyed most tremendously, I still felt often and often that I should have been much better if I had been alone.

I could not describe all those feelings, but I feel myself almost certain that they are a call from God to leave the world. I did not mention this to Father Grafton.

I am not very sorry that you think I ought to wait, because if you do not think it is neglecting a call from God, I am quite certain it will grow stronger and stronger the longer I wait, and that I may be more prepared when I see that it is God's will I should go.

I am quite certain your letter was an answer to prayer that I might be directed to do what is right. . . .

I felt myself that it would be too great a blessing to think I should go at once. Don't you think that if I wait here another year, and then feel as much as I do now, that I should go, that I ought to try it ?

Do you not think that there is no doubt that the Religious Life is the highest to which one can be called on earth ? I always thought that there was no doubt about it, although God does not always call the best men to it, but those who will serve Him best in it. And sometimes does He not call men to be very near Himself, because they would not follow Him if they were far off ? I do feel so really that I should serve Him so much better there ; and as to doing good, must not one do most good by devoting oneself entirely to His service by giving up the world ?

After a little more than a year of waiting Basil Maturin entered the noviciate on February 22, 1873. Of the happiness of his life at Cowley little need be said here. He would often, to the end of his life, refer to his love for all his brethren there, and only

his most intimate friends could even distantly guess what the parting with them cost. In 1873 he wrote to his father :

I felt more and more certain the longer I waited, having especially your full consent, that it was the right thing for me to do ; and from the experience of about six or seven months which I have had of the life, it has quite surpassed what I was prepared for. I have felt so perfectly happy since I have come here, though, of course, one must not rest in that. But I was quite prepared to be miserable for some time at first, which has been very far indeed from being the case.

In 1876 he wrote to his father to say he had been chosen to begin a mission in Philadelphia. He explained in these letters that America and England are no distance apart, and that they were not to be distressed at his being sent. ' I shall be very disappointed if I don't get cheerful letters and if I hear Mamma has been weeping, as there is really nothing to be in the least put out about.'

He was greatly relieved by the answers he received from every member of the family :

I got all your letters this afternoon and feel so thankful at the way you have all been enabled to take the news—which of course must have been a great trial. Not one word of murmuring, which indeed I might have guessed.

And so with at any rate feigned certainty of being back in a year or two, he went off for a period of ten years.

III

In all these early letters there is no mention of the subject that so filled Father Maturin's mind later—the claims of Rome : indeed, he himself once said that at that time the question ' never even came before me.' Father Maturin often used to point out the immense importance to Catholics of Newman's work in the Anglican Church, although this was only, as it were, a side issue in the Cardinal's life. In the same way Father Maturin himself in forwarding the Catholic movement in the Anglican Church, and drawing into it members of other bodies, was unconsciously forwarding an immense movement Romeward. Many souls, led by him a certain distance, still went forward. Many others, while themselves remaining where they were, passed on to their disciples the great truths of Catholicism, which these gradually discovered were only to be realised in their fullness in the Catholic and Roman Church. An interesting case of this is to be seen in Miss Bennett, the author of ' Through an Anglican Sisterhood to Rome.'

During part of the time Father Maturin was rector of St. Clement's, Philadelphia [she writes], I was a schoolgirl attending a Quaker school in that city. There was a great movement towards the Episcopal Church on the part of the younger members of some of the old Quaker families of Philadelphia, and Father Maturin's sermons had much to do with this. We schoolgirls aged from twelve to sixteen used to go to evening church at St. Clement's when Father Maturin preached if we could. If we were not allowed to go we

bought his sermons, read them seriously, and discussed them afterwards. I remember an aunt who was convinced that I sat up at night reading trashy novels and who ' made a raid,' only to discover that the paper books were sermons by the rector of St. Clement's. There was very little personal attraction in this, for I do not remember any desire on the part of any of our little set to know or talk to him, but we wanted to learn about the Church, and we considered Father Maturin's sermons ' thrillingly interesting and quite understandable.'

The years of his life in Philadelphia seem to have been happy and fruitful. His close friend, Bishop Hall, the Bishop of Vermont, has written a short account of the effect of his work and his preaching there. A few letters written in later life from Father Maturin to the Bishop have been kept. To no one, save perhaps to Father Congreve, a still more intimate friend to his very last days, does he show more of affection and confidence than to his ' dearest brother,' as he invariably calls him.

You are right in assuming [Bishop Hall says in sending these pages] that we were closely associated. We were within a month of the same age, were ordained priests on the same day, though not together [the Bishop writes, of course, as an Anglican], and made our religious profession together at Cowley. From the time of his coming to America we were in most intimate companionship.

Father Maturin [writes the Bishop] was connected with St. Clement's for about ten years, from 1876 to 1886—first as one of the assistant clergy under Father Prescott, and then as rector. The parish had

been placed in the care of the mission priests of the Society of St. John the Evangelist by the election of the Rev. Oliver S. Prescott in 1876. The church was already marked and popular in Philadelphia, but under Father Maturin it became a centre of wide spiritual influence, not unlike that exercised in London by St. Alban's, Holborn. The devoted ministrations of a band of celibate priests, with the assistance of a branch of the All Saints' Sisters, of course made an impression on the Quaker city, with the development, since far more widely spread, of ornate ceremonial in the services and the teaching of the Anglo-Catholic school. But not least among the attractions was the magnetic preaching of Father Maturin, who with his combination of French and Irish eloquence was in the best sense a pulpit orator of great persuasiveness. The printed sermons give but a scant idea of the power of his preaching. In meditations and spiritual instructions, which are more easily reproduced, his gifts were perhaps even greater, though there too the spiritual force of the speaker is missed. All that Mr. Ward has said about Father Maturin's preaching in later years, with the able analysis of his peculiar characteristics,[1] is applicable to the time of his ministry in Philadelphia, where he attracted to St. Clement's all sorts of people, including many who had little sympathy with his sacramental teaching and practice. In occasional missions, and more frequent Retreats—for clergy, sisters, and lay people—as well as by courses of sermons and occasional preaching in different places, he came to exercise a wide and deep influence among Episcopalians, especially in the Eastern States.

But great as was his power as a preacher, it would be an entire mistake to limit his influence to the pulpit.

[1] In the Introduction to *Sermons and Sermon Notes*.

His sermons were the means of drawing a large number of persons to him for individual help in the way of Confession and otherwise. His abounding sympathy, his psychological insight and penetrating discernment of character, gave to this ministry an absorbing interest. His letters to those who sought his direction show these gifts and his skill in guiding souls.

His temperament naturally made him impatient of Anglican limitations in doctrine and practice; yet he would never consciously transgress recognised obligations under which he may have fretted. Notwithstanding his love of paradox and a certain daring venturesomeness, a keen sense of humour kept him really sane both in practice and teaching. Disproportionateness he hated. In the guidance of souls he laid great stress on the faithful fulfilment of all natural duties belonging to a person's actual position.

As rector of St. Clement's Father Maturin set himself to clear the church of a debt which had long been a drag on the parish. He took a full share with his brethren in parochial activities, while devoting himself chiefly to the work of preaching and individual guidance. The religious rule of his Order, of course, precluded ordinary social life, but his friendship was highly valued among his parishioners, who with great reluctance acceded to his resignation when it was finally pressed, and he returned to the Mother House of the Society at Oxford.

Doubts as to his ecclesiastical position long haunted him, and in the end compelled his submission to the claims of the Roman Catholic Church. The perplexities which beset him undoubtedly served to make him the more sympathetic with others who were pressed with temptations intellectual and moral.

It was in the closing year of Father Maturin's

work at St. Clement's, Philadelphia [writes another Anglican friend] that his Roman 'difficulties' began to be serious enough to make his position there undesirable or even impossible, and he was recalled to England to the Mother House of the Society at Oxford in the year 1888. In his genuine humility he himself felt able to respond to this call of obedience willingly on other grounds. 'It's as much as my soul is worth to stay here,' he said to one of his brethren. His immense popularity made him afraid.

So he returned, and in the following year he paid a visit to South Africa, to the Society's house at Cape Town. There he found the Society in charge of a mission to the Cape people, partly white and partly Malay or native, and also to the aboriginal natives working in Cape Town.

Father —— sails on Wednesday [he wrote to Father Benson] and then I shall have the parish, and try to make reparation for my dislike of the blacks in America. It seems rather curious the jumble of colours, and to see white and every shade of black mixed up—I wonder what my American friends would think!—but I already feel kindling with some missionary zeal.

Father Maturin did not stay in South Africa more than about six months: in that time he visited Pretoria, where he had 'an urgent invitation' to preach in the cathedral. He went also to Johannesburg and Kimberley; visited a diamond mine, and wrote home vivid and minute accounts of the exact method of getting the stones, of the scenery through which

he passed, of economic conditions, and of all that he saw and heard during his visit.

On his return to England in 1890 [continues the same friend] he began seven years of extraordinarily widespread, and at the same time continually deepening, influence. It is true there were periods, as his letters reveal, of intense heartsearching and perplexity, robbing him of opportunities of doing even more than he did. However careful he might be, as he ever was, of allowing his difficulties to become known, they could not really be hidden; and as he was ever earnest and insistent in declaring in later years, his Society treated him with the most affectionate consideration and sympathy. He was even sent to the Continent and to Rome on one occasion, that at that sacred centre he might seek to find the resolution of his doubts. On that occasion he returned with the resolve to remain where he was.

One associated with him in two of his missions, and now a Father of the Society, writes:

My first introduction to Father Maturin was in the country parish which I then held. He was sent to conduct a Quiet Day for the neighbouring clergy, for which I had asked a conductor from Cowley. It was probably in the summer of 1891. I still remember that visit vividly. I took the opportunity to make my confession to him, and his strength and yet tenderness are not even now forgotten. For the Quiet Day some ten or twelve priests assembled from their country cures, and three addresses were included in the day's devotion. I recall, as I write, two of the three: Ezekiel's Vision of the Glory of God, borne

by the Cherubim, a type of the priest's work in the world; and the Parable of the Sower, with its vivid characteristics of the obstacles to grace set forth in the different soils on which the good seed fell. These two are ineffaceable memories. The third, I think, was St. Peter's Penitence.

During that visit, as we walked in the parish, I remember his saying, 'How happy you must be with these people, continually to teach and care for and watch them develop. I often long for it. It is so different preaching in place after place and having no pastoral tie.' I remember also how a little chill crossed my enthusiasm in the study in the evening, when a doubt whether the Church of England would ever come to a Catholic expression of life and faith came from him on some point we were discussing. It was only a half-cynical, half-wistful, 'Do you really think so?' and it was not pressed.

But from that day we were friends. And later I accompanied him on two of his parochial missions. In one, the evening congregations steadily diminished; the other was an increasing force. Yet from the first came some of the most remarkable conversions. These parochial missions lasted usually ten, twelve, or fifteen days. He preached missions in such divers churches as St. Bartholomew's, Brighton; St. Agatha's, Portsmouth; St. Peter's, Bournemouth; All Saints', Edinburgh; and he held the working people at the Portsmouth church—it was in Father Dolling's time—as firmly in his strong grip as those who hung upon his words in the churches of the fashionable.

In his methods he occasionally made use of a question-box, and prefaced his sermons with the answers to questions put in the box by attendants at the missions. I remember when he had been giving an instruction on Prayers for the Dead, a question next

day appeared from a person he knew well : ' Will you tell us how it can have been right to abolish the chantries at the Reformation, if Masses avail for the dead ? ' ' I am sure I won't,' was his comment, as he read it before the service.

His sermons were perhaps too long for a long mission ; they left the hearers exhausted, when repeated night after night ; but who could hear such sermons as those which he preached on the Fall of Man, on the Growing Sin and Final Despair of Judas, on the Conversion of St. Paul, without profound stirring of mind and heart and will ? This last sermon, heard more than once, after the time that his inner trials were known to me, always left me with the sense that he saw in Saul's separation from his friends a type of a coming separation of his own.

One more recollection bearing on the same subject comes to my mind. We were walking on a Sunday evening in a public garden on the first Sunday of the mission when the long service—including a sermon of an hour and a quarter in length—was over. We were talking on the Oxford Movement. ' Dr. Pusey always seems to me,' I happened to say, ' such a pathetic figure, left by his dearest friends almost alone, when Newman and the rest had gone, condemned by those in authority, and suspected by everybody.' ' Oh, do you think so ? It is Newman who is the pathetic figure to me.'

I heard Father Maturin give the Society's fortnight's Retreat on one occasion. It traversed actually the whole course of Holy Scripture ; God's revelation of Himself to man, and man's response. He said afterwards, ' I dreaded giving it, but really the Fathers are the most delightful people to give a Retreat to. You are carried along all the while.' ' I have been counting up how many people I have met during the

Retreat,' said one of the novices, alluding to Father Maturin's habit of drawing character sketches to bring out the points he desired to make. 'It was very living and vivid, but there was not much time to pray afterwards,' said another.

Retreats for priests, lay people, men and women, courses of sermons, missions, with an ever-increasing number of penitents, made Father Maturin a wonderful power during these years. He spent himself freely. He gave himself out to all, yet none ever felt that it was a condescension, or a trouble, or a weariness. Nor perhaps did any know the real cost that the future revealed. It was his strong, affectionate grasp of the hand that welcomed me as a postulant at the door of the mission-house at Cowley St. John, opened as it happened by him. 'Come in, we are so glad to see you at last. You will find here a splendid lot of novices.' And in six weeks he was lost to us. But, for myself, his name remained, for years daily in my prayers, as it does still.

This account of the last years of Father Maturin's ministry in the Church of England may well be closed by a tribute to his moving preaching, written by the Rev. H. Westall, vicar of St. Cuthbert's, Philbeach Gardens, a church at which Father Maturin, rejoicing in its spacious pulpit as in its devout congregation, often preached. He says:

Apart from himself, as distinct from his lovable self and his great personality, who can forget the wonderful preaching power of Father Maturin. It was so distinctive, so unlike anything that one heard from anyone else—it was so original. Full of information and instruction, it held his hearers spellbound; it

took possession of them soul and mind, and made it impossible to be inattentive. It was true eloquence—a torrent of eloquence—but it was more; it had a fascination that was irresistible. And the delicious accent of his native land imbued his language with a musical beauty difficult to describe. And then his wording and care of expression were so striking. For every word that he used he conveyed the impression that he had in reserve several that might have been expressed. And it had a fearless eloquence. He spared no one—he was direct—his righteous soul knew no compromise. A spade was always a spade to him, and an evil that deserved rebuke had a lash that spared not. And yet while there might be a squirm as it fell, there could be no resentment, for there was not a suspicion of venom in the utterances of the speaker. But, after all, it was Father Maturin's earnestness and reality that arrested the listener most of all. It was a voice in the wilderness, and if it came through human lips yet it breathed the holiness of the sanctuary, and seemed to sound from Heaven itself. There was little that was human in it, and so much that was divine. The preacher has gone and the voice is heard no more, but his words remain, and are remembered as occasion suggests them. This is the best proof that his preaching was not in vain.

IV

Nothing so well shows Father Maturin's own thoughts and feelings during a period, as he has told us, of fully ten years, than his letters to others going through the same struggle to decide whether to remain in the Church of England or submit to Rome. 'I think,'

he once wrote, 'I can say without exaggeration that the question was never out of my mind for an hour while I was awake for ten years or more.'

Many of these letters are given in their place in this volume; but a few may be quoted here which show, as he himself put it, first the conviction that 'I must do it, but that death would not be much more difficult or distasteful'; and, secondly, that 'After many years in which my mind had been preying upon one subject to a degree in which I often felt physically battered and beaten, my mind almost at once after a few months became perfectly at peace on the subject. The question has never even suggested itself since.'

To many it will always remain a source of perplexity that a man of such intellectual force, and of so straight and courageous a character, should have remained so long in uncertainty about his position. In trying to understand the years of this journey one or two things should be especially borne in mind. Father Maturin was a man of great natural humility; he was under superiors and with brethren for whom he had an immense respect. Again and again he would feel: 'If Rome is really right, if this is as plain as it sometimes seems, surely these men would see it before I should—I must therefore be deceived.'

Again, God's dealings with his own soul and the souls of others were matters for daily realisation and daily thankfulness; and these dealings had come to him through the system of which he was beginning to have doubts: these doubts were therefore a source of veritable agony to him.

And, lastly, we must remember that until he felt really clear of the claims of Rome he believed it to

be his duty to go on trying to draw souls nearer to God as a spiritual guide in the Anglican Church. He was therefore absorbed in heavy missionary work and constant preaching which, to a certain extent, distracted his mind from dwelling without intermission on the one problem.

It will be remembered that Cardinal Newman, after retiring from St. Mary's, took three years of solitary meditation to see clearly 'the Blessed Vision of Peace.' But indeed to all those of us who have not had to face such a toil, the years of seeking and the happy finding must always remain one of the mysteries of God's grace.

To a friend going through the same struggle as himself, Father Maturin wrote very freely during these years; they came into the Church almost at the same time.

September 27, 1893.

I feel for you in all you say about yourself more than you can think. I suppose most—or many—who have had those questions stirred in their minds must also feel 'if only I had been more true where I am I should be able to judge more clearly whether it is God's leading or my own fancy.' The sense that one has been often so unfaithful, both to the grace and the light one has, must indeed add to the difficulty. Yet surely it may also be a means of grace and restoration—to fight the matter out in the dark when one might have been in the light, accepting the difficulties that are aggravated by unfaithfulness. I do not think one can merely set the matter aside when it has forced itself into one's life, because one feels that one has not been true to what one has. Rather, I feel that the battling out the whole matter may be—whichever

side one finally decides—the means of restoration. One cannot allow oneself in spiritual lethargy for any time and rouse oneself out of it without intense pain—this may be God's way of rousing you. I mean, all these doubts, and the facing them, may restore more than you have lost. You remember St. Ignatius' tests when two ways lie before a person and he does not know which is the right one.

(1) Which would you advise another to follow who felt exactly as you know yourself to feel ?

(2) Place the two paths before you and ask, which would lead you more directly to God.

(3) Which do you think you would do if you were to die next day ?

Yet when all is said and done, I find it more easy to advise another than to decide myself ! One's mind gets entangled amidst complications, and I am afraid the will shrinks from action sometimes. You ask me how I feel. It is exactly a year since I was here awaiting the final step, when I meant to go to Beaumont. I believe I tried then to see what was right and to do it ; yet looking back over this year I feel that I made a mistake in not doing then as I had meant to do when I left Oxford. This year has not been a success for me, I am afraid, in the sense in which it ought to have been. This physical breakdown has kept me back from work which I should otherwise have taken up, and so, it may be, have put the question aside. I can't but feel it has been providential, and I hope I may be able to come to a final decision before November. There are difficulties, no doubt, on the Roman side, but to me those on the Anglican side are more overwhelming ; yet the sense of responsibility, and sometimes the doubt whether one has the right to keep the question open which one had meant to close last November, makes me hesitate.

I have spoken to you quite frankly, and I need not ask you to keep my confidence and not to mention this to anyone. . . . Sometimes it is all as clear to me as daylight that I must not go on ministering where I am, and then again all becomes clouded and I wonder if I allow myself to exaggerate difficulties. I know I have your prayers, as you have mine. God grant us grace neither to hold back nor press forward beyond His leading, but to obey as He speaks.

To the same friend he writes on October 19, 1893:

I do not think anyone can really sympathise with all the perplexing questions on the Roman subject who has not experienced them. It seems as if one ought to see and act; but at the last moment so many things come before one to make one hesitate and doubt. What I feel is this—if it has come before one quite clearly, clearly enough to make one feel it is one's duty to go, then one ought not to reopen the question or go into it again, but pray for grace to act. The star disappeared just within a few miles of Bethlehem. There must be almost necessarily a great reaction at the last moment when all one's affections and feelings and associations plead with one to stay where one is. But if one has not that clear conviction that one must go, then I believe one ought not to go. Newman speaks, just before he was received, of being *certain*. At the same time I think one ought not to allow oneself to be put off by such a question as Indulgences, etc., any more than one ought to be shaken by some detail of Anglicanism. Keep to the main question. Either the Anglican position is defensible or it is not; if it is not, Rome must be right. How very easy it is to write it all down, and how simple the whole question seems; and yet one knows the intricacies and many side

currents that carry one this way and that, till one is driven well-nigh distracted. Do what you believe is most to the glory of God and the good of your own soul, and what seems to you, taking everything into consideration, to be right. I think my course seems more and more clear to me. I hope it may continue so. I am truly thankful for this time of quiet and freedom from work. Yet it is hard to do what all those one loves and reverences must think a fatal mistake and a delusion.

Six months later he writes again from Louvain:

May 23, 1894.

I have been waiting to write until I had something definite, or more definite, to say. I feel now as if the end cannot be very far off. I should not be surprised—unless I get some new light on the subject—if it were next week, but you will, I know, keep this quite to yourself at present. I have such ups and downs, and such times of light and darkness, that I scarcely dare to anticipate what a day may bring forth. I trust my own experience will make me very patient and merciful in judging others in such questions, and very slow to rush into controversy and unsettle anyone else, for there are so many complications and difficulties in the question that it is hard to see clearly what is right. One has so often said: 'If I could be convinced of such or such a thing I should go to-morrow.' Yet when one is convinced one sees other and other points beyond which make one wait many to-morrows. It is difficult to write, as it is hard to say, much just now—hard to know oneself, and see whether there is not lurking behind all some unconscious self-deception; indeed, one feels as if there were possibilities

within oneself that are impossible to fathom. I know you will give me your prayers.

To anyone who reads these letters it would seem, as indeed it seemed to Father Maturin, that the anxious doubting and questioning of years was over. But three years were yet to pass before his way was clear before him. In July 1894 he writes :

At present I am trying to put the whole matter out of my mind and to try if one can get an answer by striving to get nearer to God. Perhaps the straining of the mind is not the best way.

A little later he writes, still to the same correspondent :

I am writing the first possible moment to say that, having done all I feel it possible to do in considering the question, I believe it to be God's will that I should stay where I am, and so I hope that I shall never have to reconsider the question. I wanted to go, and should have been thankful could I have seen my way to going, but when it came to taking the final step I felt that the road was distinctly blocked. I felt, too, that it is possible by constantly going over the same ground to get one's mind into such a condition that it is almost impossible to see clearly. I know, too, that though many questions that are disturbing are not answered, yet God may show me without answering them that one must wait and bear difficulties. I have been through some very terrible times this week ; but I hope, please God, that now I shall feel I have had my answer. It certainly is against my inclinations in many ways, as all my drawings lie the other way.

It is little wonder that, after these years of anguish and suspense, Father Maturin did not readily or lightly speak of what he had gone through. To himself at times it seemed doubtful whether he was indeed seeking the Will of God alone, or whether self-will or self-love sometimes obscured the issues. But to anyone who reads these letters his single-heartedness and sincerity are visible in every line. A little while after his reception into the Church he wrote to the same friend :

. . . From the day on which I went to Beaumont to the present hour the English Church melted before my eyes like a cloud, and has never taken tangible form since. . . . On entering the Roman Church I said to myself : Here is all and more than all we fought for and longed for in the English Church, and it is all taken as a matter of course. . . .

One more letter on this subject must be quoted. It was written many years later, when he could speak more readily of the past. It was written with the sympathy inspired by his own past sufferings for others going through the same agony, and with that fullness of peace and conviction that never left him after his reception into the Church.

. . . Those terrible days before I was received I shall never forget, and every detail is as vivid as it was yesterday, though it was nearly nineteen years ago. I have never been able to understand the mental attitude of people who speak of their reception in a state of exaltation. The more real the English Church has been to you, and all your past experiences in it, the more terrible the wrench. And there is added a

kind of uncertainty as to what you will find after you are received, the fear of the unknown—and with me, and probably with you, moments of mental agony, lest through some unknown act of your own you are, after all, making a mistake and doing wrong. I had such feelings up to the last moment, and went through the reception like a stone. I think all this is better and truer, and more spiritual, than being in a state of mental exaltation. You only feel the wrench and the fear and the pains of dying, later you will feel the joy of the Resurrection. An act of the will done with every inclination against it—an unaided act of the will, without the help of a feeling, with all the feelings against it, with no help but conscience, and that even often clouded, is not an easy act; but it is the assertion of one's freedom, and in a sense a redemptive act, atoning for all the weaker yieldings of the will in the past.

At such a moment one feels utterly alone, and how little help one can get from anyone else! But be assured that no agony of regret for what you are leaving, or shrinking from the unknown future, or mental recoil of any kind, need lead you to any uncertainty that you are right. I believe it all to be the most healthy and proper state of mind for any one who loves and has loved their religion in the past. You have believed in, and been associated with, all that is best and most beautiful in the English Church. Many of the Cowley Fathers are saints, and most of what they teach is true; but you will find in the Roman Church, in time, something more beautiful, more tender and more human, as well as divine, and something so much broader and larger, that you can only understand it by experiencing it.

I have quoted from these letters perhaps more

largely than seems proportionate to so short a study. Yet the question was so vital to Father Maturin, and occupied so large a place in his mind, that this can hardly be avoided.

The value of this particular group of letters is largely biographical and psychological. In the 'Price of Unity,' Father Maturin's mental processes are more clearly analysed, in so far as such processes can be analysed at all, or be brought up from the depths almost below conscious thought. The 'Price of Unity' tells us, from an historical and logical standpoint, all Father Maturin had to tell. But the letters written at this time are, as it were, torn out from a mind and heart actually and at that moment bleeding and suffering—and in this lies their value.

V

Father Maturin arranged to go to Beaumont College on the twenty-fourth anniversary of his going to Cowley, February 22, 1897, and he was there received into the Church on March 5. He went thence to Rome for his studies and ordination to the priesthood. On May 6 he wrote to Father Congreve:

I am now established here, I hope, for good. This is the Canadian College, a most delightful place. The colleges are mostly for students of different nationalities preparing for ordination and attending lectures at one or other of the Universities, but this is almost entirely for priests, who come to get an additional year in Canon Law or to take their doctor's degree. They very kindly took me in as a boarder, not in the

college, so I sit at the high table with the heads of the college and two archbishops who are staying here. The time-table, etc., is much the same as at Cowley. We get up at 5 o'clock, in chapel 5.30. Meditation till 6; then the masses begin and go on till about 7.30, when we have breakfast, dinner at 12.30, and supper—now in the summer at 7.45, prayers at 9, and then all go to their rooms.

Father Maturin loved Italy, and above all Rome, which he saw with a poet's imagination lighting up its past and present. Yet it is a curious contrast to his power of expression in preaching or talking that so little of this feeling is really conveyed in his letters. It can be felt there all the time, underneath descriptions that are almost commonplace of processions or scenery. He fails to express in writing the picture that was intensely vivid to his own mind, and yet somehow one learns from these very letters *how* vivid this was.

I shall be glad to get to work again [he wrote in his last months there], but *very* sorry to leave Rome. I have got to love it more and more, and the Italian ways—when they *are* devout I think their ways of public devotions are the ideal ways; there is a lack of self-consciousness and an abandonment impossible to reserved and self-conscious English people.

Long ago [he wrote to another friend just before his return to England] I felt when I left America as if I left half myself there behind me, and I am afraid I shall leave quite another quarter in Italy.

Of his intimate feelings he wrote to a few friends from time to time, generally during the leisure given

by the summer vacation when the college closed, and he spent a couple of months in England. One letter, written in answer to the question whether he should visit Oxford, tells a good deal of what he was feeling and thinking.

I don't expect that I shall be in Oxford. I am afraid there are not many there that want to see me now. It's curious to feel oneself shut out from many places where one had many friends a few months ago, but that is quite natural and probably right. At any rate, I am more than repaid by finding myself at home in any church all the world over ; and what wonders one finds when one has passed the doors and entered. It is an amazement to me that we in England should live so close to what we are wholly ignorant of—for we are ; one has no idea of what it all means till one enters and sees for oneself. It strikes one as being so broad and so obviously true. I wonder where the idea that people generally attribute to Rome of slyness and untruth comes from. I can only imagine it to come from hell, for I can see no faintest token of it. Faith seems perfectly fearless, for it knows it is grounded in reason, and there is a completeness of conviction all around one that is contagious. I think one has but to cross the threshold and enter to find conviction pour in through every sense and faculty. I saw and had the privilege of living amongst the very best of the Church of England, men infinitely better than I ever hope to be, and I thank God for all the holiness and devotion that there is there ; but truly the difference between all that and this is the difference between individual effort and organised life. Amongst savage tribes there is perhaps a greater display of individual courage

than in an English regiment, but the savage tribes can't produce anything like one of our regiments. There is, too, none of that almost necessary self-consciousness, which springs from the fact that one does and believes differently from others. But I dislike writing in this tone. It sounds rather the regulation thing to say!

Two chambers hath the heart:
There dwelling, live pain and joy apart.
Is joy awake?
Then only does pain her slumber take.
Joy, in thine hour refrain!
Tread softly, lest thou awaken pain.

This verse was written in an album by one who had much suffering to bear, and to whom, as to all sensitive temperaments, the wall between these two house-mates was the thinnest of partitions. The tread of one will always set the other throbbing. And so in life it is often hard to say whether times of supremest joy are not also alive with pain. Acute states of feeling seem to meet and mingle when wrought to the highest pitch.

For Father Maturin his life in Rome was one of these times; joy and pain lay close together; sometimes one was awake, sometimes the other, but always there was a deep peace.

He had come to England for the summer vacation of 1897, and although he had not intended to go to Oxford, he wrote as follows to Father Congreve:

I have been so extraordinarily taken care of so far that I think I can leave the future in God's hands. Will you say a prayer for me sometimes that I may

be guided aright. I am so often in thought at Cowley. Someone said to me the other day that it was said I did not feel leaving at all. I often think I am the most callous brute on earth, but I don't think I shall ever cease to love Cowley and all that belongs to it. I say the old prayer every day, and I intend to slip down quietly to Oxford before I leave and prowl about unseen, and, if I can sum up courage, look into the church.

Of course [he wrote to another friend at that time] the final step is full of suffering—indeed, I know of no suffering like it. Near though we seem and are in faith, yet the step is a wrench like death ; but we cannot have the best thing life has to give us without paying a heavy price for it.

That was it—' The best thing life has to give us,' and his conviction that it was worth the price never faltered. But the price was the severing of the dearest associations of a lifetime—the loss of old friends, the beginning at the age of fifty of a new life amid strange surroundings, and uncertainty as to his future and vocation.

On this last question he was much preoccupied during his time in Rome, and wrote of it to two of his most intimate friends, Father Congreve and Bishop Hall. He had a desire to enter some religious order, but the choice seemed wide, and he did not feel any special call to one more than another.

It was different [he wrote to Bishop Hall] where the Religious Life meant Cowley or nothing, but where there is such a variety, and where one feels utterly uncertain, one can't at my age run risks. I have no desire to get out of the vows, which I do try to

keep, but binding oneself at once to a community seems to me different.

To be at peace and to wait seemed to him his task.

I often feel [he wrote in another letter] like Elihu while Job's friends were speaking, 'like wine that hath no vent, ready to burst like new bottles.' But it is good to have to keep silent.

That phrase he used in a letter to Father Congreve, 'It is good to have to keep silent,' expressed something of Father Maturin's feeling as to the mental state of one who has lately found his way into the Church. Many years later in the 'Price of Unity' he gathered and gave to the world the fruit of his own experience.

This is perhaps the most suitable place in which to set down something of what that experience led him to say. It is interesting to note how much of his ideal of the right and true frame of mind under these trials had been unconsciously manifested in his own life and conduct.

It is sometimes urged as a reason against becoming a Catholic that an apparent deterioration of character is seen in some converts after their submission to the Church. Religion, it is said, is essentially a means of drawing near to God: if one form of religion has served this end to a high degree, it must surely be wrong to leave it for another of which this cannot be said with the certainty of experience.

In the first place, Father Maturin maintained in answer to this objection that no fear of deterioration should hold any man back from following what he

knows to be the truth. However much help he has received in the past through a system he then believed true, it is very certain he will cease to get now he knows it to be false, now that his adherence to it would be acting a lie. Moral deterioration must follow upon living in a false position. And the Church offers him far more of help than he has ever received in any incomplete and partial form of Christianity; if he does not receive this help it is from some lack or failure on his own part.

Yet Father Maturin recognised frankly that there are cases in which this deterioration of character in converts has been apparent. How is this to be accounted for? The group known as the High Church party, to whom he chiefly refers, lives in a state of religious zeal not unmixed with excitement. They feel a sacred cause is in their hands, each one is stimulated by those around him, precepts are made commandments, a much stricter standard is observed in this small body than that enforced on her children by the Universal Church. Thus occasionally a man of no real strength of character, who has accepted the standards around him, has been living at a level above what he could have reached by his own efforts. Such a man enters the Church—

And with the removal of the external standard he has been used to, and the supplanting of personal rules by ecclesiastical rules which are of obligation, there is certainly a serious risk of a man letting himself down gradually and to find that he has become content to do what is of obligation and little else. In fact, the change of religious systems discloses a characteristic weakness which he did not realise in

himself before. For nothing can really take the place of personal effort, and, if that flags, the true character will be lowered with it.[1]

But this Father Maturin did not consider in any sense typical. To him a far more real difficulty was the case of the over-enthusiastic convert, who is anxious to make the break between past and present as complete and unbridgeable as possible.

They will make merry over their efforts at what was good, and talk of what they once reverenced, and what at the time was to them intensely real, as ridiculous and absurd. Any approaches to Truth that they experienced were simply caricatures, diabolical efforts to mislead.

All this is to be ruthlessly swept away, memories, results, and everything else. The past is to be forgotten except as a bad nightmare, everything is to be erased, and the future is to be written upon a clean slate.

I have met not a few converts to the Catholic Church who seem to think that all this kind of talk proves to the world what good Catholics they are, and helps to commend them as such to those whose lot has placed them in the Church from the first. They out-Catholic Catholics, they run riot in their new home. They often seem like people who are underbred and find themselves among their social betters, and in their efforts to adopt their manners and ways and to show themselves thoroughly at home with them, defeat their aim and only advertise their vulgarity and lack of breeding.[2]

[1] *Price of Unity*, p. 73. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

This attitude is one not often met with; but unlike the other it is typical of a class, although a small class, of converts. Father Maturin had these people somewhat on his nerves, and this fact led him to ponder the question of how to become at home in the Church without strain or unreality.

He faced the extreme difficulty to a man of middle age of making a fresh start, of beginning a new life in new surroundings, with new thoughts, at a time when the enthusiasm and adaptability of youth is gone. He realised the strain on mind and character that all this involved, and the essential thing to his mind was to minimise as much as possible the inevitable jar and jolt that such a change must bring with it. Taking St. Paul for a model, he considered the ideal attitude towards the reception of a great new truth.

Any new truth at first received may seem to displace all the old truths of which the mind was in possession. So to St. Paul it seemed that the acceptance of Christianity must upset all he had held true in the past. But truths cannot be contradictory —the new truth holds room in it for all the truths contained in the old system. St. Paul went away, and in silence and patience let the old and the new work out their synthesis; and then he discovered that all the old truths, all the old hints and guesses at truth, were contained and infinitely enlarged in the great new all-embracing truth. This synthesis he gave to the Church in the epistles to the Ephesians and to the Hebrews. There was to be no jar and no unnecessary casting away.

All that cannot be reconciled with the new Truth

must go, but it goes, so to speak, of itself—it is pushed quietly aside without much of a jerk or a jar, in the splendid synthesis by which all gathers around the new, central, all-combining truth, and discloses its place and meaning.[1]

This attitude of St. Paul's is, Father Maturin maintains, a model for one who is leaving an imperfect form of Christianity for the fullness of truth. The appreciation of the truth and beauty in what he has left will make him realise far more fully, far more acutely, the surpassing truth and beauty of what he has found. I have heard a preacher maintain that almost the whole of St. Mark's Gospel might be read in the pages of Isaias—yet far from this making him fail to appreciate the Gospel, it made him bring out fresh and overpowering beauty in every familiar line. 'The law our pedagogue brings us to Christ.'

Thus Father Maturin speaks in a fine passage of the way in which Anglicanism brought him to the fullness of truth in the Church.

It is the very beauty of what he is leaving that has driven him forth, the very truth of what he has believed that showed its incompleteness. The very strength of his faith in what he has had, has pointed him to something stronger, and driven him forth. The very love which was bred in him for the Catholic Church has awakened the instincts which warned him that this was not his home. It was she to whom he had committed his soul in trust and confidence, who pointed him to another. The beauty and dignity of her worship, the music and rhythm of her prayers

[1] *Price of Unity*, p. 12.

entered into his soul and for a time satisfied all its aspirations, and then awakened desires that she could not satisfy. They seemed like the memories of some other land that had once been his home, and that stirred up longings that were nothing short of home-sickness.[1]

And in another passage he states the conclusion:

Then you began to realise more and more that you were an alien, the citizen of another country, a waif adopted by one who was not his mother, and all the inborn instincts for home and country had awakened in you. The Voice of the Teacher you had been following moved you, and drew you, because of its resemblance to that of another whom your instincts recognised almost unconsciously. All that was true and beautiful in what she taught you, stirred and awakened dim memories of a long-forgotten home.

In a word, you perceived that in truth you had never been an Anglican, that what you had loved and craved for was the Roman Catholic Church, and that you had loved and received all, and only, that which resembled her.[2]

With this outlook and in this spirit Father Maturin desired to begin his life as a Catholic.

Some try to urge one into controversy—lay people [he wrote to Father Congreve], but I have refused to be urged so far. I believe in it less and less as an instrument for effecting what is desired, and I am sure in England it has not proved a success.

[1] *Price of Unity*, p. 20. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

And a few weeks later he wrote :

I leave Rome in a few weeks' time, and get to England about July 1 and go to the Cardinal's ; it seemed the only thing clear to me at present. Please say a prayer for me. The return will not be unmingled pleasure ; but I hope, please God, to be able to build up rather than pull down. I had a long and comforting talk with the Cardinal [Cardinal Vaughan] who was out here, and who was quite sympathetic with my ideas.

After arriving in England Father Maturin began at once his chief work of preaching. After some months' experience he wrote to Bishop Hall :

I have, ever since I came, felt myself perfectly at ease—able to talk as freely as ever I did to you, and in preaching I have never felt the slightest restraint or fear of being pulled up. I have from the first preached with just the same freedom as I did of old. I asked the Cardinal once if he had ever heard any criticism of my sermons as not being sufficiently Catholic, and he said : 'Never ; why, have you heard any such criticism ?' I have never felt so much at ease and so able to talk freely with any man of his position as I have with the Cardinal. He has been always sympathetic with me ; he told someone the other day that he loved me.

It seemed certain that great friendliness and understanding would be reached between two men so straight and single-minded as were the Cardinal and Father Maturin. In questions of policy, however, they often differed considerably. Father Maturin

used to tell one story very characteristic of each. They were out driving together one day, and the Cardinal was deploring the fact that the movement towards the Church in England was not more widespread. 'What do you think,' he asked Father Maturin, 'is the chief obstacle that keeps people back?' To which Father Maturin answered: 'If you want me to be perfectly frank with your Eminence I should say it was yourself.' The Cardinal, far from being offended at this, asked Father Maturin his reason for this view. In reply Father Maturin pointed out that the Cardinal seemed in his public utterances to cast doubt on the good faith of so many Christians outside the Catholic and Roman Church. To one who had lived among them as he himself had done, their good faith did not admit of the faintest doubt, and a general line of *intransigeance* only served to hurt their feelings unnecessarily and prevent them from drawing nearer to the Church. Of the High Church position in particular the view of the two men was diametrically opposed, the Cardinal regarding it a dangerous and specious substitute keeping men back from the Church, Father Maturin looking on it as a teacher of Catholic truth educating them gradually to receive the fullness of truth in the Church.

Although he did not always think the Cardinal's attitude towards the outside world perfectly wise, and had in talking to him laid an almost exaggerated stress on this fact, Father Maturin believed that it was largely made up for by the admiration won by his greatness of character and singleness of purpose.

The Cardinal is a great loss [he wrote, on his death

in 1903]. I shall miss him very much. I think he was very fond of me. He was really a saint. I think one of the humblest and certainly most unworldly men I ever met, perfectly simple and as straight as a die.

Father Maturin's first months in England were spent at Archbishop's House. In January 1901 he went for a time to St. Mary's, Cadogan Street, and from there he wrote to Bishop Hall :

You see I have changed my abode, temporarily at least ; the Cardinal wanted me to come here for six months on the Mission. He wants me then to go back to him, but I don't know about that. I have only been here a couple of weeks, and the work—parish work—is so very much more interesting in every way than preaching all over the place, and to congregations in which I know very few people, that I do not think I shall undertake that kind of work again. Of course, when the cathedral is opened, which will probably not be this year, it will be very different, as I should have a confessional and work there. But as I get older the constant preaching is a heavy drain, and I do not feel sure it is worth it.

He always felt drawn away from his work of preaching, both by a desire for parish work and a longing to resume community life.

In 1905 he made an attempt to unite these two aims by joining the newly-formed Society of Westminster Diocesan Missionaries. During the time he was with them he became intimate with Father Herbert Vaughan, who writes of him as follows :

My real acquaintance with Father Maturin began when he joined the Society of the Westminster Diocesan Missionaries, of which I was a member. We were then in charge of the Mission at Brentford, but as Father Maturin preferred to live in London, the Cardinal arranged that we should take charge of the parish of Pimlico, and that Father Maturin should be the parish priest. Consequently we all moved to London.

Father Chase was our Superior at that time, but owing to ill-health he did not live with us. He and Father Maturin rented a house for us in Warwick Square.

Father Maturin put his whole heart and soul into his work. He secured a building in St. Leonard's Street and converted a part of it into a chapel, and made club-rooms beneath it. The chapel was known as St. Margaret's. Some good friends of his helped him to furnish it, and soon St. Margaret's became very popular and was well filled for each Sunday. There Father Maturin had his confessional, and there he preached continually, drawing many souls to profit by his labours. Sometimes he arranged for special courses of sermons on the weekday afternoons, and these were always well attended. Preaching and giving instructions filled many of his hours; and so he had little time, and I think little taste for visiting in the parish. Therefore he left practically all parochial work to us who were helping him.

I soon grew very fond of him, and always found him a congenial companion. He had those most attractive of gifts, a warm heart and a great power of sympathy. He was always ready to help, and was generous and good to the poor.

Certain events took place which led to the breaking up of our work in Pimlico, and the Cardinal then

handed over the parish to the care of the clergy of the cathedral.

I went to Willesden Green, but always kept in touch with Father Maturin. He often preached for me, and even took over the care of my 'Children of Mary.' For some time he came every month and gave them an instruction and talked to them afterwards in our adjoining hall. This he used to look forward to.

Sometimes he thought he was misunderstood, and grieved that he was little encouraged in his Catholic priesthood. And it was then my joy to show him how much I and many others appreciated him.

There was, perhaps, a certain lack of discipline in his life and character, but as a counterpart, he possessed many sterling qualities, and among them a rare gift of friendship, which was a help and a solace to the many souls who sought his advice and his guidance.

Father Maturin was a man of high ideals. He testified to these by his desire of religious life and of a closer union with God. And it is a moving fact that his last recorded act was one of self-sacrifice and charity, when he helped to save others in the hour of his tragic death.

In 1910 Father Maturin decided to go to Downside and try his vocation as a Benedictine. A few months before he went he had written to a friend :

On Monday evening I go to Mount Melleray [into retreat] till the end of next week. I hope there to see what I ought to do—I think I never should be at peace till I felt quite sure that I have not a religious vocation—even if I were doing much more than I am doing at present. My first idea on becoming

a Catholic was to become a Jesuit, and I asked them to take me at once, but they thought it better that I should wait; then the Cardinal proposed that I should live with him and do missionary work about the diocese, but that never really amounted to anything; and since then I have always felt at loose ends, and always felt that after all those years at Cowley, the natural thing was for me to be a Religious. That I had a vocation I have little doubt, and whether I have still I am very uncertain, or whether at my age I could begin, I don't know. Please give me your prayer next week.

For Father Maturin at his age it was to attempt the impossible. He loved Downside, and all the monks with whom he made warm friends. But they could not throw him upon the sole companionship of boy novices, and yet he was a novice. The solitude, therefore, became too great a strain, and he was hampered also by the trial of sleeplessness. During the last years of his life it was usual for him to be unable to sleep at all until two or three in the morning. Reluctantly, therefore, he was obliged to give up the attempt. He returned to London and resumed the life that had practically been his from the date of his reception, that of preaching in different places. He had a confessional in St. James's Church, Spanish Place, and there, and at his rooms, he did a work for individual souls that cannot be estimated. It was done so quietly that it is only as years pass and since his death that one fully realises what it was. Help given to penitents, to those seeking the Church, to souls in search of their vocation. A friend once said to him, 'I wonder you can sleep at night

when you think of all the people you have sent to the Carmelites.' The answer was, with an infectious laugh, ' Well, I do sleep very badly ! '

In 1914 Father Maturin was offered simultaneously the parish of The Holy Redeemer, Chelsea, and the chaplainship of the Oxford undergraduates. These offers gave him very great pleasure. He was always apt to undervalue his own work, and to think that he was doing nothing. If he had by chance a free afternoon he would usually fall into depression and announce to his friends that he did no work at all. He perhaps never realised how essential his own work was, and moreover that no one else could do it, whereas many more punctual and practical priests could be found for the routine of parish life.

Oxford was a place that called urgently for a man of Father Maturin's outlook and abilities, and to which he was ideally fitted. A Catholic undergraduate exclaimed with joy : ' What a comfort it is to have a chaplain to whom I can introduce my agnostic friends.'

Though not without the incidental fits of depression that had haunted him all his life, Father Maturin was exceedingly happy at Oxford during the short time that remained. He loved the undergraduates —both the Catholics and their various friends—and they loved him.

I have never entertained so much in my life [he wrote to a friend]. We had a mixed meeting of Anglicans and Catholics last night at Balliol—very interesting. I gave a lecture on the Use and Abuse of Prejudice. One very High Church man said he thought some

men had a vocation to doubt ; certainly their Church gives them plenty of opportunity to fulfil their vocation—but they fill one with sympathy and affection.

The outbreak of war unhappily brought an abrupt end to what had only just begun. No place in England was more quickly changed in the earliest days of the war than Oxford. Of the Catholic undergraduates not more than a dozen ' unfit ' returned to the University the term that followed that 4th of August. The rest had all taken commissions or enlisted in the ranks. Father Maturin decided, as his work in Oxford was practically suspended, to miss the Lent term there and go again to America, where he had preached the Lent of 1913.

In those early days of the war German propaganda was busy, and with a certain measure of success, in creating doubts among the Allied nations of the feeling in America towards them and their cause. An Englishman therefore started for the States in some uncertainty as to the atmosphere in which he should find himself. Father Maturin immediately after landing was able to say, ' On the whole, I feel that my many prejudices are not going to be violently attacked.' And after a month in New York, where, of course, he mixed to a large extent with Irish-American society, he wrote :

The whole tone in regard to the war is all that we could wish. Conversation wherever I have been is just the same as in England. I can't imagine where we got the idea in England that they are pro-German. They hail every success of the Allies with enthusiasm. . . . Last Sunday was kept as a day

of prayer for peace. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed most of the day, and there were large numbers of people praying.

Father Maturin's Lenten Course was an immense success, and friends who met him reported that he was in the best of health and spirits. When the time for his return was drawing near, he wrote to several people asking for prayers that he might be kept safe from all the perils of the sea. A note of tragedy is struck by his determination to return home on the *Lusitania*. He feared he might have to sail on the *Orduna*, to be back in Oxford for the first two Sundays of term. He wrote and telegraphed in the hope of finding someone to take his place for these Sundays.

I hope to sail [he wrote on April 17] Saturday week, May the 1st, in the *Lusitania*. I wired to Urquhart,[1] asking him to arrange for the first two weeks, and waited for a fortnight and got no answer; then I wired to his sister, asking her to send on my wire in case he was away, and only had an answer about a week ago, saying all right.

The German determination to sink the *Lusitania* had been taken very lightly by most people. On account of her great size and consequent speed she was held to be far safer than smaller boats, and Father Maturin expressed that opinion in several letters. He begged his friend, Mr. Wilfrid Ward, who was also in the States, to wait and travel with him; but the latter was obliged to be in England a month earlier,

[1] Mr. Francis Urquhart of Balliol College, Oxford.

and returned by the last completed voyage of the fated ship. On May 7, 1915, was committed the great crime that sank her, and Father Maturin was among those who perished.

When his body was washed ashore it was found without a life-belt, and it was believed that he had refused one, as there were not enough to go round. Survivors from the ship related that they saw him standing on the deck very pale, but perfectly calm, giving absolution to several passengers. As the last boat was lowered he handed in a little child saying, 'Find its mother.'

Father Maturin used to say [writes Mrs. Wilfrid Ward [1]] that he knew he should have a lonely funeral, and he prophesied that it would be on a wet day and in an empty church! This came back to us when the body was brought home, and the great cathedral at Westminster was crowded for the Requiem. He had a larger place in the heart of Catholic London than he ever himself suspected.[1]

Something of what his loss meant to his more intimate personal friends, whether Catholic or Anglican, is expressed in a beautiful letter to Father Maturin's sister, Sister Fidelia, from Father Congreve:

August 10, 1915.

My dear Sister,—You will charitably tell me whether we have to believe *The Times* report of the loss of your very dear brother. You will have seen the report and will know whether there is any room

[1] *Last Lectures*, p. xlviii.

for hope at all, that he may have been rescued. We came to Cowley at the same time, and served our Postulancy and Novitiate together.

Our Irish origin drew us together, and enabled us generally to understand one another. And so I came gradually to find all the vitality of intelligence and affection, all the light and joy and beauty of his soul. I know of no friend outside my own home circle who was so dear to me, or whose existence in this world made it so hopeful and beautiful a place.

I refuse to dwell in thought on the sorrow of the end, for that is passed and over for ever, and one thinks of the Infinite Love that has welcomed him home. And of all the hope and happiness he has brought to numberless souls in this world, whom he has taught to look through it, to Our Lord.

His smile I can always see the moment I think of him, his smile, with which he always welcomed me, God bless him. In the Lord you and he will not feel very far apart. 'I believe in the Communion of Saints.' God be Himself your comfort.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

G. CONGREVE.

VI

As an orator few will be inclined to refuse to Father Maturin the adjective 'great.' His permanent position as a thinker it is too soon to estimate, even if the present writer were at all qualified to do so. Yet it seems well worth while to trace out some of the lines of the philosophy of faith which may be found in his books and sermons. This philosophy grew under the influence of Christian thought and life on a mind and character of singular force and

orginality. He could not, perhaps if he would, have formulated it definitely and logically and as a whole, for his mind was that of an orator. He wrote as he spoke, leaving a gap here, an unfinished thought there, and counting on the imagination of his reader, or listener, to do his share by bridging the gaps, and finishing the broken phrases. In preaching, this method was unconsciously artistic, but in writing it became sometimes obscure, and, in reading any of his works, allowance must be made for it.

Father Maturin's instrument in his work for souls was, in fact, chiefly the spoken word; his writing held a secondary place. Yet, from the letters that form this volume, from his Sermon and Retreat Notes, and from the books he has left, much may be seen of the wide and deep foundations on which he built up the spiritual life. By ignoring petty detail and insisting on large principles his teaching gave a new inspiration to many lives.

In our view of the spiritual life he would insist that the thought of creation should be placed first—before that of redemption.

> The root thought [he says] that lies at the base of the Christian character is that God is our creator. . . . 'Thy hands have made me and fashioned me.' . . . The Architect comes to the ruined building, and, not having forgotten His plan which is ever in His mind and has never changed, He says 'I will restore it, for I originally made it.' I look up to God and say: 'Where is my ideal? It is in the mind of God; a part of that mind I am, and that mind is changeless.' . . .
>
> Redemption is the restoration of the original plan.

God created man to live in close union with Him—man spoilt God's conception by self-will and separated himself from God. But God's love was stronger than man's malice, so He still came and redeemed man.[1]

The work of the Christian life, then, is to second the redeeming work of Christ in the soul by which it is restored and made after the pattern in the mind of God. For each soul that pattern is different. There is no rivalry in the Christian life, for each soul has its separate vocation. Each soul must come to the Mount of Prayer, and there receive the revelation of the pattern of his life—as Moses saw on the Mount the pattern of the Jewish tabernacle.

Moses, therefore, before the work was begun, was called up into the mountain, and God revealed to him the pattern of the building. He saw it all in vision, something strange, mysterious, perhaps fantastic, certainly not what we would have imagined —and then he came down and got the people to work. They had to do not what seemed to them best, but what was revealed to Moses—and its excellence, its perfection, consisted in its being an exact reproduction of what was in the mind of God. All the building and carving and weaving and dyeing of materials was but the transference from the region of ideas into the region of realities, of what was existing in the mind of God.

If we enlarge this conception we have one of the greatest and most inspiring principles of human life. As the tabernacle existed before it was built, so does every human life exist in the mind of God. The

[1] Unpublished Retreat Notes.

task of each member of the human race is to transfer the plan of his life existing in the mind of God into the region of material realities.

Such an idea is stimulating and ennobling to the poorest life—the material for the work is supplied by God Himself; there can be no failure on the ground of unfitness, lack of gifts or powers. The tabernacle of your life lives in the mind of God unsullied by any flaw, mistake, or sin, and the material out of which that life has been formed lies before you—it is you—with your powers, few or many, as God gave them. We can have no doubt of their suitableness or sufficiency; the provider is God, the builder is yourself. There is a pattern made of those very materials in the mind of God—and the secret which God whispers to each soul is: 'See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the Mount.'[1]

To realise and carry out that plan will tax every man's powers to the uttermost. The Christian ideal must be positive, not negative: evil must be crowded out by good. 'Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.' Fill life so full of good that no room is left for evil. Live to the highest: life, not death, is the Christian motto.

In our life there is nothing to be destroyed, but much that must be guided, disciplined, abated, controlled, and kept under. We must not destroy, but find the true life and the true end of every faculty, and bear it up to the highest, and use those powers aright for God. Sin is the false use of things that God has given me to use.

Then you say: 'Is there no such thing as morti-

[1] Unpublished Sermon Notes.

fication in the Christian life ? ' Try for one single day to live to the highest without mortification, without suffering, and you will see how impossible it is. Forcing up is mortification ; as we strain to live the highest life even for five minutes, we see the desire to sink down to a lower level. Try for five minutes to look at something high and lofty, and we find the mind will fall ; it closes its wings and sinks to earth.

But mortification is not dying, it is the rising ever higher and higher, and leaving behind the things that keep us back. Suffering is the concomitant of the resurrection life.[1]

If, then, every power of man's nature is to be used to the highest, all these powers must be brought together, and the personality of man must act as one great whole. On this view Father Maturin often insisted, and especially in relation to the apprehension of truth. ' I understood because I believed,' he says in one place, ' not always I believed because I understood.' It is in other words Pascal's saying ' The heart has its reasons of which the head knows nothing ' And in one place Father Maturin uses unconsciously almost the very words of Pascal when he says ' there are many things that can be learnt by the heart of which the head knows little.'

It was not that Father Maturin undervalued the reasons of the head, but he maintained very strongly what Father Thomas Gerrard has called ' the philosophy of integralism '—the idea that the personality cannot be simply divided into various faculties, but must act as a whole. A note left by Father Maturin

[1] Unpublished Retreat Notes.

on 'Christ's Influence on the Intellect' forcibly expresses this view.

There is one word that our Lord uses again and again, and gives almost a new meaning to, and that is 'Truth.' Again and again He speaks of it and of Himself in relation to it. 'I am the Truth.' 'For this cause came I into the world.' 'The Truth shall make you free.' 'Sanctified by the Truth.' Now truth is for the intellect. We love with the heart, we decide with the will, but we develop the intellect with the Truth. In His teaching about Truth we see His teaching about the intellect, and it is a very striking form His teaching takes. To-day we hear a great deal about the intellect and a great deal about Truth. . . . But, while we are ready to say in a certain sense that the Truth shall make us free, we are startled by the idea that it should make us free from sin, or that it should sanctify us. We feel that great intelligence rather bars the road to sanctity, than helps to sanctify. The Truth in His idea is no merely intellectual truth, it is moral, it is spiritual. Not to abide in the Truth is to be a liar. Again, when the Paraclete comes, He is to lead us into all truth, not merely about facts. This spirit of Truth is to develop character. . . .

All this shows that in Him the intellect never acts alone. He never simply knows, but loves and wills at the same time. Truth which the mind discovers becomes the possession of mind and heart. So complete is the unity of His inner being that what comes to Him as knowledge is gathered into His whole being; the right and the true, the wrong and the false are not separate in His thought.

We constantly see in men unassimilated intellectuality. We find men whose knowledge has not

been pressed into character, the intellect forcing itself into prominence out of proportion and harmony with conscience. The greatest men are those in whom you cannot separate the mental and the moral lives; the intellectual side is blended and lost in the symmetrical unity of their inner being.[1]

But in us how is this unity to be brought about? By the Truth Himself, Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, Who will take possession of our ways, our minds, our life. His personality will take full possession of our personality. This claim of Christ to 'fill up, make one with His each soul He loves' is, says Father Maturin, the unique claim of Christianity. 'What teacher ever spoke of himself as being found in his disciples? Would a Jew speak of doing all things through Moses—or a Mohammedan of being buried with Mohammed that he might rise with him in newness of life?'

Union with Christ is the end of the Christian soul: it is thus also the end of humanity. It is the climax of prophecy, the explanation of the chosen people. The law as a schoolmaster has brought man to Christ. This union for individuals and humanity is to be effected through the Catholic Church.

Till the Truth has gone down into the heart and burns there like fire, and breathes there like air, it is lifeless. Now it is in worship that we learn our faith as we are drawn closer and closer to its Author; the learned man with his cultured mind kneels beside the beggar who cannot read, yet both

[1] Unpublished Sermon Notes.

believe the same. Now the Blessed Sacrament is the concentration of faith and worship, it is the presentation of the great dogmas of our faith in the language of the heart.

Our Lord Himself prescribed one and only one form of worship in which all the great doctrines of our faith were taught. To that he bid men come to be taught almost unconsciously. Two great doctrines sum up Christian faith and life: God becomes man and gives us His nature.

I can't doubt the meaning when I hear *This is My Body*. Other religions profess to satisfy the religious instinct: Christianity to give a gift to heal us—this is the life of Christ. Therefore the Altar has always protected the supernatural teaching of Christianity.[1]

If, then, we believe this, if Christianity is the fulfilment of the religious aspirations of humanity, if it is the divine means whereby God has chosen to reveal Himself to man, every detail of the Christian worship and teaching becomes of the utmost importance, for it safeguards the great truths of revelation.

Catholics hold absolutely, Anglicans theoretically, that perfect union with Christ is dependent, not only upon the gift of His life, through the Sacraments, but also upon the submission of the intellect to the Truths of Revelation in their entirety. 'Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.' If you are a partaker of His life, but are not in full harmony with His mind, so far as He has revealed it, the union cannot be said to be complete. Indeed, there are, in such a union, elements that may lead to a rupture. A son,

[1] Unpublished Sermon Notes.

in whose veins his father's blood is flowing, may have differences with him that may lead to a final breach.

And Rome maintains that for the preservation of the completeness and unity of the Faith, Our Lord created a centre of unity in His Church, a final and absolute authority which resides in the See of Rome. He foresaw, she says, what has in fact taken place, that a number of bishops might break away from the unity of the Episcopate, and claim the right of acting independently. And that if such a degree of independence were allowed to one body, it could not be denied to another, and thus the unity of the Church would be destroyed, and there could be no certainty that the members of these separate bodies would be taught the fullness of the Truth once committed to the Church.

. . . With her it is not a mere question of ecclesiastical policy, but that she considers it one that has directly to do with the perfect union of the individual soul with Christ. She maintains that it is the divinely constituted means for protecting the Church from disruption, and consequently for securing the Truth to every individual in it. And if the preservation of the Truth in its entirety is as necessary for perfect union as the Sacraments are for vital union, the means provided for its preservation are as necessary as those provided for the securing of the Sacraments, and are well worth contending earnestly for.[1]

Moreover, if the Church be indeed the body of Christ, unity is as necessary to life as in the case of the human body. The head by means of the nerves

[1] *Price of Unity*, pp. xxiii and xxiv.

sends its commands to every limb : the heart through the arteries sends the life-blood into every member of the body. If a limb be cut off it is separated from the life of the body.

Father Maturin worked out this analogy very fully in the 'Price of Unity.' St. Paul's vision of the Church as the body of Christ, and of each one of us as members of Christ was ever fresh and wonderful in his eyes. He was never tired of dwelling upon one or another of the aspects of this thought. Union with Rome was in his eyes vital if the Christian life was to be kept, or renewed, in the various separated groups of Christians. And by means of this union, through the arteries of this body, the very life of Christ was communicated to countless souls. To this thought of living by Christ's life he returned again and again. The power of personality he always felt to be a wonderful and mysterious thing. No human life is without the power of influencing other lives for good or ill. We must, whether we will or not, influence others, and in our turn be influenced by them. The true Christian is one whose whole self is so possessed by the personality of Jesus Christ that he must show it forth to others as the candle shows the flame by which it is consumed.

Man stands, thus, between a world in darkness and God who is light, that lighted by the fire of God he may show Him to the world. As we look back through the past we are struck by this fact : every ray of Heavenly light that God ever gave to man, He gave not directly but through other men. Watch through the history of Israel the growth of the knowledge of God and of Truth and you will find it has

been always the same. God gave the light to Israel through some great Israelite if there were any time of special darkness or of national apostasy. God takes one man, fills him with the knowledge he would give, sets his soul on fire and puts him in the darkening Temple of His people to pour out the light, and in His people we always find that mysterious quality in response, the power of being ignited. . . .

What God did to Israel in the past was a type of the great illumination which He gave to the world in Christ. In those other cases God kindled His Divine fire in the hearts of individual men, and through them He illuminated His people. Such kindlings were premonitions of what human nature was capable of, that it was capable of a mysterious union with God, of being made an instrument through which God could be revealed. His holiness and wisdom were felt; in the Incarnation this was seen in its fullness. There God set human nature on fire with His Godhead, 'to be a light to them that sit in darkness.' Men saw what manner of Being God was, and what they were capable of. That union like a lighted lamp revealed the light and revealed and glorified the lamp. What was needed was to know God, to know what manner of Being He was, and they saw the glory of the only Begotten in the face of Christ.

And what He was, we in our measure are to be. He was the light, and we are to be the light of the world. We may be very small and feeble creatures, but as men we are the candles of God made to be ignited and give light and to set others on fire.[1]

And in this work of bringing the light of Christ into men's lives we must ever, Father Maturin would

[1] *Sermons and Sermon Notes*, pp. 263, 264.

insist, be ready to welcome any ray of light however feeble by which they already walk. We must remember that, in Cardinal Newman's words, if a religious mind educated in heathenism or heresy 'were brought under the light of truth, it would be drawn off from error into the truth, not by losing what it had, but by gaining what it had not; not by being unclothed, but by being clothed upon.' We must strive ever, said Father Maturin, 'to build up rather than pull down.'

'To build up rather than pull down'—these words are the key-note to Father Maturin's philosophy of faith and view of the spiritual life. He took as the model for the Catholic Christian's task to-day St. Paul standing on the Areopagus in the midst of a civilisation far more corrupt and steeped in error than even the civilisation of modern Europe.

Amidst the corrupt polytheism of Athens, St. Paul saw one ray of truth. Standing on the Areopagus he said, 'Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For passing by and seeing your idols, I found an altar also on which was written, To the unknown God. What therefore you worship without knowing it, that I preach to you'; and beginning from this, he led them on to Christ and the Resurrection. The light in which the great Apostle's soul was bathed seized upon the faint glimmer of truth, embedded and scarcely visible, in the murky fog of their superstitions, and claimed it as Christian and Catholic. If the light of that truth could be kindled so as to shine with all its fullness in their souls, it would emancipate them from their degrading polytheism. Their idols and superstitions would creep

away into the darkness, and all that could not stand the light would perish.

It was a bold act. But it was the act of one who had a strong faith in the power of Truth to destroy error. Some people nowadays would, perhaps, characterise it as a little too broad and tolerant, to find any truth in such a cesspool of corruption. He knew better, his faith was clearer, stronger, more wide and large in its view. For he knew from his own deep experience that evil could only be conquered by good, and that in the fullest sense of the word he could trust the Truth to take care of itself.

. . . Amidst all the revolutionary consequences that Christianity must involve in the beliefs and life of a pagan, he seeks about for the one conservative element that may preserve the organic unity of the soul's life.

. . . He would protect the soul from the danger of wreckage in the storm by which new truths would assail it on all sides. The shreds and tatters of truth already grasped must cover its nakedness as it clothes itself in the new garment. Or, shall we say, the few strands of tarnished silver, interwoven with the poor stuff with which they had been clothed, will be found, burnished and brightened in the Seamless Garment of Christ.[1]

To be lit with the divine fire, to be united to the very life of Christ, Father Maturin saw as the goal and the meaning of each man's life. In human nature he saw at work both the God-sent impulse to this union and the man-made bar to it. Man is 'a fallen creature in a fallen world.' The 'Man of the world,' therefore, seems sometimes more complete, more fitted

[1] *Price of Unity*, pp. 29, 30, 31.

to his surroundings and adorned by them, than the Christian saint. Man in his fallen state is at home in a fallen world.

Yet there is in man, too, the element of which Gilbert Chesterton has well described one symptom as 'feeling home-sick at home.' He feels he ought to fit in, ought to be happy, and yet he is not. He is tormented by cravings—often ill-understood. How many years did it take St. Augustine to realise 'Our hearts are made for Thee, O Lord, and they are ever restless until they find their rest in Thee'?

It may be remembered that in 'Loss and Gain' Charles Reding, still confusedly groping after the Church, defends celibacy at one moment as a penitential condition, and at another as the highest life man can aspire to. His cultured Oxford tutor accuses him of maintaining a contradiction. 'Perhaps our highest perfection here is penance,' said Charles, 'but I don't know; I don't profess to have clear ideas upon the subject.'

This was one of the paradoxes of Christianity on which Father Maturin insisted. The foundation for the highest spiritual life of union with God was the recognition, not only of the creaturely state, but also of the fallen state. Of the perfect recognition and acceptance of the penalties of the fall he speaks in a sermon on the religious life as the best foundation because the truest. This foundation laid we can then 'lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes.' The cords may be lengthened by a wider acceptance of the truth and beauty that surround us, while the stakes are at the same time strengthened by an ever deepening life of union with Christ.

Concerning his own spiritual life and experience Father Maturin was very reticent. Only sometimes in his sermons his hearers felt that the secret 'broke through language and escaped.' Of him as of Cardinal Newman perhaps the fittest motto would be 'cor ad cor loquitur.'

LETTERS OF FATHER MATURIN

I

THESE extracts from letters to a penitent dwell especially on a line of thought which Father Maturin constantly urged in his sermons—that the Christian ideal is positive not negative. 'Thou shalt love' takes the place of the prohibitions of the Old Law. Sin should not be merely driven out, leaving an empty space, but should be as it were 'crowded out' by love and goodness. 'Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.' These letters are not dated, but were all written in the years 1909 and 1910.

(1) . . . It is a great step when a person is enabled to see how God is using the evil in one's nature to work for good, nothing can be better than that. There are those who never can see it, and, yet, I am sure that certain kinds of temperaments are only saved through the violence of their temptations. They find that they can't walk on an ordinary easy path, that they can't be even respectable unless they are aiming at something much higher, at a close union with God. Many, I believe, would be saints if only they were tempted to be great sinners! But, having no strong passions and no sense of difficulties that they can't meet with a little effort, they jog on, on an easy path,

and never get to know what great things God can do in them. It matters little what it may be that God makes use of to bring you to Himself, as long as it does do that. The evil is turned into an instrument for good—'your sorrow shall be *turned into* joy,' not followed by joy, not a preparation for joy, but turned into joy. The Apostles could never have had the intensity of their Easter joy if they hadn't had those three days of blackest sorrow. There is a verse in the English translation of the Psalms which I always think most suggestive. The Psalmist is describing the Pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem, and he says: 'Who, going through the valley of misery *use it as* a well; and the pools are filled with water.' They didn't merely look forward to struggling through the vale of misery and at last reaching Jerusalem, they made use of it, and made it a place of refreshment. Don't merely look forward to a time when temptation may cease, but use it. It's God's instrument for uplifting your whole nature and healing other defects in it that you would not otherwise know. . . .

(2) . . . Remember, to die fighting is as truly a victory, as to die having conquered. Resolve with yourself that, though you fail again and again, you will not give up struggling and you will not let go your confidence in God. . . . There are many lessons to be learnt by failure, and the road of most of those who have succeeded in anything on earth is marked by failures which taught them often more than successes. The Apostles when they tried to drive out the unclean spirit failed, and they asked our Lord: 'why could we not cast him out?' and our Lord answered 'because of your unbelief.' It does not seem to us, nor I suppose to them, that they were lacking in faith. That failure led to later triumphs when they could say: 'Lord, even the devils are subject to us.' . . .

It's better not to be too violent in your efforts, but try to feel 'I *can't* resist, Our Lord must do it for me: let Him do the fighting,' and think of those words 'abide in Me.' Feel Him within you and around you, feel the light of His Presence shining in and through you; the devil is not afraid of you, but he is afraid of Him. Let all your efforts at such times be to realise your union with Him. 'We are members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones'; the devil is powerless over Him.

God bless you, my dear child, put away all feeling of discouragement and say to yourself: 'He must do the fighting, I must learn more and more to abide in Him, the only Place of Safety, the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land.' 'They that put their trust in the Lord shall be even as the Mount Zion which may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever.' . . .

God bless and strengthen you.

(3) . . . The most degrading temptations do not necessarily degrade, they are often the great means of purification, and the fire of passion can drive the soul to God as truly as the fire of love can keep it there. Each of us must take ourselves as we find ourselves—we are what we are at this moment, whether through our own fault in the past, or through natural temperament, or whatever it may be. But, here, where we are, God comes to us, looks into us and sees what by His grace we are capable of. If a person has a difficult nature, and has let it have its way in the past I think God will be more merciful to us in our failures than we could dare to be to ourselves. Love always rests upon what is best rather than what is worst in the one who is loved, and I believe anyone who is trying is more lovable and acceptable in the eyes of God than in the eyes of those who love us most on earth. There are natures that if left

to themselves would take things easy, and would not take the trouble to get near God. Perhaps you are like that, God has let you see that you can't get on without Him—perhaps this temptation will remain with you till it has taught you all you need to know, and taught you how to meet it and conquer it. . . . Try to realise at these times God's love for you, if you don't feel love to him—and to put yourself at Our Lord's feet with the Magdalene, not struggling to get feelings, but to hold to Him by your will. The soul has only a certain amount of capacity to feel; if it has spent that to the utmost at any time in what is wrong, it is exhausted, and though it turns to God, its power of feeling for the time is spent, but not the power of will, and as it holds on by the will, in time the feeling comes back. . . .

(4) . . . Remember, perfect humility is the blending of two opposites—a *very* high idea of oneself, as having great possibilities with God's help, and a low idea apart from God—'Apart from Me ye can do nothing.' 'I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me.' Perfect humility is perfectly true—I know what gifts God has given me, and my responsibility for the use of them, and I know how I fail. It makes one always hopeful and always ready to receive Our Lord's rebukes, when He [withdraws] consolation in prayer, etc. I think a naturally strong and passionate nature needs to learn by *experience* its own weakness, and that it can do nothing of itself, that it has not in itself, within the limits of its own nature, the power to resist temptation. I think we often *think* we know this, but later we often find we didn't really know it, or if we did we rebelled against it. A good solid knowledge of our own incapacity is the only true foundation of lasting success, the knitting of the heart and will to God in a timidity

and fear which is the source of unfailing and dauntless courage. When I know if I let go of Our Lord's hand I go down at once—when I have learnt that, in the bitterness of an utter disappointment with myself—then I learn to cling to Him, and then I feel His power pass into my trembling limbs like a tonic after the fever has burnt out. . . .

(5) . . . We never get to love by hate, least of all by self hatred. 'O ye that love the Lord see that ye hate the thing which is evil'—that is very different—hatred of evil springs from the love of God, but the love of God does not spring from self hatred. Indeed, I think with the love of God there is an ever deepening sense of the greatness of the human soul, and of one's own soul with all its paradoxes. Remember *your* soul is the object of God's love even when you sin most. The father only longed for the return of his son when he had left him. There was no *anger* against him, only grief—only the sense of missing him. . . . Don't look ahead—'according to thy day so shall thy grace be'—only try to get into the way of running like a child to its mother's arms—to the arms of Our Lord whenever you feel danger near. Then if a great storm arises you will know where to find safety. 'Apart from Me ye can do nothing'—God bless you, my dear child.

(6) . . . When the storm comes, everything depends upon what you have been doing and thinking *before*, more than at the moment. It is he who '*dwelleth* under the *defence* of the most High' that will be able to say in the hour of trial: 'Thou art my defence and shield and my trust is in Thy Word.' . . .

(7) . . . The only way we ever can recover from past wrongdoing is by being tempted—the resistance of the will, to what the heart desires is the way to recover the strength that the will has lost through every

yielding. When we sin, will and passion and feeling all rush headlong in the choice of what is forbidden ; when the will stands out alone against what [the evil] it has chosen, and meets all the currents of nature against it, it does something to regain its poise. And contrition turns every suffering, every trial into the Cross. All the sorrow and suffering in the world is turned into a means of sanctification by contrition, it extracts the sting and bitterness, and turns all into a blessing. The sun draws up the salt waters of the sea, separates the salt from it, and sends those barren waters back upon the earth in refreshing showers. And contrition is love, and it turns all the barren and devastating things of life into sources of life and refreshment. . . .

(8) . . . The influence of a life of suffering can bring many to God—if you had to suffer great physical pain, you would try to offer it up for yourself and others —why not take this as your cross, *bear* it, offer it to God as your cross. Don't rebel against it, but offer it. Some of the great Saints have had those same temptations ; you allow yourself to despair by revolt, and by thinking no good can come of it. It is really a strong nature trying to find its vent in a wrong direction. Try to wrap yourself round in the light and holiness of Our Lord and turn it all to Him. It's waste of energy and power merely to rebel against it, *use* it—like Israel of old ' Who going through the vale of misery *used it* for a well and the pools were filled with water '—they *turned* the vale of misery into springs of refreshment. Go before the Blessed Sacrament and fight it out till you find yourself at peace. . . .

The following letter was written to a person much upset by the Encyclical ' Pascendi.' It was in answer

to a letter in which the writer said her faith in the Church was shaken not only by the contents of the Encyclical, but its tone which seemed contrary to everything Christian and Divine: 'It raised up a spirit of cruelty, of hounding people down and driving them out, of sacrificing souls and truth to preserve a hollow unity—anything to save appearances. If the Church is the one divinely appointed body on earth with authority to teach in the name of Christ, how can she countenance teaching in schools and seminaries, as to the Bible, etc., which she knows to be historically and scientifically untrue? If she is God's witness why fear *any* truth? The Church satisfies the spiritual part of one, but one is not in watertight compartments, and surely she should possess and satisfy the whole of one.'

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February 23, 1908.

My dear Child,—I have just got your letter and am going to write a line at once, though yours opens too big a question to go into in a letter. I have felt what has been in your mind for some time, but I do honestly think you let the Encyclical get a bit on your brain. I think I feel as much as any one the dislike to reactionary methods . . . but I lived so long in a Church that left you to believe or not believe, teach or not to teach as you pleased that an overpressure of authority does not really trouble me much. The pendulum will swing back in time. After all, the methods used are for the preservation of the faith—they may be mistaken and unwise, but they are not like those of the Anglican Bishops, to hinder the faith,

and it surely would be better (if such a thing were possible) to keep back the intellectual advancement of the world for a century, rather than that the faith should suffer one jot or tittle of loss. Besides, it is not the Church's office to teach science, and if she thinks any scientific doctrine injurious to the faith, she, with a natural instinct, opposes it, though afterwards she may use it in her own service.

I wonder if you realise how far things had gone in some quarters, and how far the *speculations* of biblical critics have been accepted, though unproved and untested, and how many people have been disturbed. I personally know of no two books that I felt to be so upsetting as Loisy's 'L'Evangile' and 'Autour d'un petit Livre,' it was not merely laymen but priests who were turning out their speculations broadcast and upsetting many. Most people, I think, felt something must be done—that something has certainly been very drastic, but that has always been Rome's way.

Have faith in God and in the Church with two thousand years of experience of its ways and of the end of those who break from it. The tone of those who are in opposition is in itself enough to condemn them, and to show that they needed to be pulled up.

Just one word about yourself. These things become to each of us personal, and I believe everything depends upon the *temper of mind* in which they are taken:—the spirit of gentleness and humility—the trying to make acts of confidence and trust in God. There is an excellent sermon of Dean Church's on (I forget exactly how he calls it) the *harsh* spirit, and he compares Lacordaire and Lamennais. Lamennais got angry, bitter, morose, rebellious, and went to pieces. Lacordaire, who had just as much to

bear, accepted it and did a splendid work for the Church. I think one can think of a subject that hurts one till the mind loses its perspective and proportion. There is so much to bless God for and to satisfy one's spiritual nature in the Church that one can afford to leave these disturbing things to those whose duty it is to deal with such questions as the Encyclical. It must have seemed when Galileo was condemned as if there was an end for Catholics of all scientific research. In St. Bernard's time it seemed as if Catholics could never read Aristotle, yet within a century he became the backbone of scholasticism. Look at those who break away in bitterness and impatience, and be sure humility, patience, and silence in the long run bring peace and victory.

I write in great haste.

The two following letters deal chiefly with questions of social life and intercourse. In them Father Maturin showed his sympathetic understanding of the difficulties to be faced in modern social life. The old barriers of reserve and convention that are now on the ground were, at that time, already tottering. To a young woman of strong character and high aspirations it seemed the noble and generous thing to help in their overthrow, to go out perfectly fearlessly into the new world, tilting against the old conventions and oppressions that had hedged women about in the last centuries. Father Maturin could sympathise very strongly with this point of view, but he feared the spirit of reaction. He wanted to save all that was best in the old ideals. He feared the loss of the positive Christian ideal of womanhood amid the negation of the artificial limits built up by society.

10

August 17, 1892.

The difficulties that arise in social life are very great, I know, and often one can't be led so much by clearly defined rules or reasons as by instinct. I may not be able to give any reason why I feel that such or such a person is to be avoided, but I feel it and know it. I think it's the same with company, and forms of society, as with individuals, and I think a woman's true instinct doesn't often mislead her. I quite understand and have full sympathy with the reaction from the narrow lines and party distinctions that used to be the chief guides for social intercourse. They were often artificial and many of them wrong—but, remember, reaction has its danger of running into the opposite extreme. We may protest against what was bad in the past in such a way as to create another evil, and perhaps a worse evil in some ways. What we really want to do is to protest against all that was bad, and mend it, and to leave whatever was good. I myself feel that the two great guides that will keep one safe in many a difficult question, as to where one ought to go and whom one ought to know, are charity and moral distinctions. I am sure one has no right to expect oneself to be kept safe when one goes anywhere or knows anyone simply for the sake of shocking narrow people's prejudices. We shall never remove prejudice by shocking it. And I am equally sure one will not get any harm, or do any harm, by going anywhere, or knowing anyone, for charity's sake. Then one will, quite unconsciously, break down all prejudice; the artificial and arbitrary distinctions of society give way before a broader and a stronger principle, and with the true sense of brotherhood or

sisterhood one can go almost anywhere. But, then, we have to show our disapproval of wrong, and sometimes, often, I think, the only way one can show it is by avoiding those who are openly or deliberately violating the great moral principles. I am sure one can often cling on to a friend who has gone utterly wrong, for the sake of helping her, but even then there may come a time when one feels ' no, I am getting harm and doing no good.' There came the time when Samuel would see Saul no more—there comes the time when great public men part on some question of principle, and every one respects such partings ; they have nothing of the Pharisee about them. I think in a mere matter of business there is not necessarily any question of character, but in such personal relations as taking a favour, it is really an act of friendship, and I cannot think it would be right to take a favour of a person whom one would not make one's friend. What you say about many whom you know thinking you a fool not to take all you can get from anyone is just that low and unworthy tone one wants to protest against, at least in act, and to raise others out of by showing a more attractive and a truer standard. My feeling would be to cut a man who had ruined any friend of mine !

As to the other point. I think one may go *anywhere* that duty calls one, but to be able to go to some places one must be clear that it is duty. I can quite fancy—indeed, I am entirely conscious of the exciting pleasure of doing risky things. But at the same time I do not think one is justified, unless under the call of duty, in going where one sees what shocks one's moral sense. Why should one ? It *may* not be a question of wrong or right in itself, yet it may for other reasons be unadvisable, for the sake of others, for the sake of a certain indefinable beauty that passes

away when one is able to look calmly on evil, or even when one knows of certain kinds of evil. The protection which innocence gives passes away with knowledge. I mean, though things may, so far from being a temptation to oneself, be positively hateful, yet still the constant sight of what's bad takes away the bloom from the soul. Though it may not be wrong, then, I do think it would be better to keep away from places that are not nice.

I have written you a very long letter !

God bless you.

II

To the Same

January 8, 1893.

In regard to the special virtue of purity, I think one finds amongst good people three classes :

First there are those who have been protected from knowing anything about that kind of evil; they go through life and come in contact with a great deal of wrong in others and do not see it ; their eyes have never been opened to know evil. Then there are those who know all about it, and whose one effort is to keep their own garments clean ; who see it indeed, and often see more than there really is, but keep themselves apart. I think this is one class of your friends in Paris, and I confess they are not the kind that commend themselves to me. Then there are those who know, perhaps, all that is to be known, and who know also that the best protection is to go out towards the contaminated to help them, or to show at least they don't despise them, however much they make it felt that the evil *is* an evil and a thing to be abhorred. I do not think

the class of person of whom you speak, who uses her models, etc., but sees or feels evil everywhere and so keeps clear of it all except for work, I do not think she is *innocent* by any means. Innocency comes in contact with evil and doesn't know it; it baffles temptation; it is protected where no one else is. If you ask me which is the most admirable—such a person, or one who knows all that is to be known, and has had perhaps her own time of fierce conflict and come out strong and pure, longing to help others and surely able to help them—I answer, I think it is impossible to compare them, either in themselves or the effect of their lives upon others. You could no more compare them than you could compare St. Paul and an angel. St. Paul's is the rugged strength that has been gained in the battlefield, and his sympathy is that strong, tender, human feeling that opens the door of every heart, because it has come to him as the fruit and reward of life. He did not do anything or study anything to get it, it was not to be learned by observation or from books; it was the outcome of a life that strove to be true, and had to fight and suffer for truth. But as you feel the thrill and power of his words and the consciousness of his strength, you do not feel that if you could see and speak to an angel he would have less power to help—his help would be of a different kind, but it would be very inspiring and very strong. So I think those who have lived and been, by God's grace, kept from the knowledge of evil, are not by any means *necessarily* weak or undeveloped. They *may* be so, they may be merely grown up children; but why should they not have learnt the lessons of life through other experiences—suffering, for instance, or sorrow, or cruel treatment. If you would compare a girl such as you describe, who knows about wrong and tries now in one way now another to give a helping hand

to those who are down very low, with another who is innocent, compare her with one who, notwithstanding, has learnt the meaning of life in some other struggle and who *has* developed. For instance, a thief doesn't need to go to a converted thief for sympathy or help. He will get probably much more help from a man who never knew anything about that special form of evil, but who, it may be, has had a tremendous fight against intemperance. Do not think that so severe a price as the knowledge of each *form* of evil is necessary for development. For us, in our nature as it is, there *must* be some knowledge of evil, for we have the seeds of it within ourselves; but I do not for one instant believe we have to study it, or even come in contact with it deliberately, to gain sympathy or power or a full development. It is quite abhorrent to me to be told that the Fall of Adam was really a development and sin is a stage in growth—it *isn't*. It bears no comparison with imperfection or ignorance, or anything, except perhaps disease, and disease is not a step in the development of life!

I should say, therefore, that God's original warning to man—'of the Tree of knowledge and good and evil, thou shalt not eat nor touch it'—was the true law: never know any evil that one can keep from knowing. *Innocence* is the most beautiful and the most helpful and inspiring thing in the world, and it does not involve either childishness or weakness or lack of full growth. One who is innocent of a vast amount of evil that goes on, yet has learnt her lesson of life and has *lived*—in suffering, poverty, sorrow, self-sacrifice—who could call such a one undeveloped?

And next to innocence is that knowledge that drives one forth to help and sympathy, and worst of all is that selfish, narrow, timid nature with eyes always open to see evil and suspect it, and never trying to

lessen it or to help. I don't know whether I have made myself at all clear? I should say the mere *knowledge* of what is going on in the moral—or rather immoral world!—could do *no* good. What one learns in the battle of life, however one learns it, becomes part of oneself and can go forth from one for good.

Have you ever read 'Pompilia' in Browning's 'Ring and the Book'? I think he appreciates the positive force for good that innocence is in the world.

In this last group of letters Father Maturin dealt with the beauty of character which is developed by one who passes unspotted through life in the world. In the letter that follows we see an equal realisation of the efforts and aspirations of the contemplative life—a realisation which explains why he was so often called upon to give the Retreats of various enclosed Orders, both men and women.

12

[Undated.]

Many, many happy and ever happier returns of your birthday, and may each one bring you more and more of your heart's desire and open Heaven more clearly to you.

The life you have chosen is at the very gate of heaven, standing in the vestibule, waiting for the door to open. You have but to wait there, and the waiting is purgatory, the purifying and perfecting of your soul, to see all when it is opened. Sometimes it will be very dark, as you have turned your back upon all the distractions and pleasures you might get on earth, therefore at times you must feel the darkness and solitude. But in the darkness and solitude as

you wait your soul is being cleansed and purged and tested, and you can say, though God seems to leave you, ' He is very near, He is only testing me, the door is closed and I am close to Him, any moment He may come to me '—' tarry thou the Lord's leisure, be strong and put thy trust in Him.' And at times the door will open and flood your soul with peace and joy. ' No man hath forsaken houses and lands, etc., for My sake but he shall receive in *this world* a thousandfold, and in the world to come life everlasting.' I suppose it would be comparatively easy to give up everything for God, if we at once felt His Love and Presence. But in times of darkness and solitude and trial, when every memory of what you had comes crowding back, and calling to you to come back, and you keep on saying, ' No, I shall go on if He leaves me in the darkness for months,' then the soul becomes more and more perfected, and all that was amiss in the past gets purged off. God, at those times, is asking you, ' Do you love Me enough to leave all and wait for Me, even though I *seem* to ignore you and leave you to yourself,' and as you wait in patience you are really saying to Him, ' Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison with Thee.' The wrench from all you had in the world, and I don't know anyone who had more to give up, I don't think anyone could have borne better ; at least I never saw anyone give up everything more generously and courageously. But the inner wrench, the turning of the whole self to God and the loosening of the heart from everyone is harder, and there must be, I suppose, for everyone that terrible time of testing when you have given up everything, and seem for the moment to have got nothing. That is purgatory, the intermediate state between earth and heaven, when the heart cries out for love and has

nothing to rest upon but God, Who does not seem to care. Every hour that you go through such times of darkness purifies your soul more and more for the Vision and the Love when it comes; and it will come most surely, strengthening and refreshing you and making you more and more certain that God has chosen you for Himself, and counts every tear and heart pang, and is watching you when He seems furthest from you with loving and anxious eyes. I think God must love very specially a person who has such a power as you have of making others love you! And remember, as the Rev. Mother said to you, that she would not spare you because she felt you were capable of great things: that not sparing you is a sign of real love and trust, and God will treat you in the same way. He will not spare you, if He's going to make you what you want to be. I expect the Rev. Mother would *like* to see you much oftener but doesn't, because she trusts you and knows you understand, and I imagine it will be the same with God—if He does give you times of darkness it is because He trusts you and wants to make you a saint. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He will receive.' There is my sermon, and I think it would be more fitting to come from you to me than from me to you!

The following letter was written to one who wished to be a nun and was refused on account of age.

13

July 2, 1914.

I have just got the enclosed from the Prioress of ——. You see my letter evidently has not influenced her one way or the other, though I am sure you would

have thought it quite fair. I gave her four reasons for taking you and four against, but as you see from her letter she could not have taken you, anyhow. I hope this will set your mind at rest; I think it ought to. I know and fully sympathise with your feeling that you ought to try, and how little another can affect that feeling. It has been with you for so long that it was in possession, and when the opportunity came it asserted itself, and the less you liked it naturally, the stronger the supernatural claim appeared. Now you have tried, and I think the result ought to set your mind at rest completely and show you that it is not God's will for you, and I hope you will give it up and that you will be firm with yourself in setting it aside and turn your mind in another direction. Don't let yourself think that you ought to try somewhere else—it will be a waste of energy and mental power. 'Behold,' said our Lord, 'I have set before thee an open door and none,' neither man nor devil nor circumstances, 'shall shut it.' Well, that door *is* shut, and it is not shut by man nor devil—unless the Prioress is the agent of the devil! Therefore you may rest assured that, in the providence of God, it is not the door through which you should enter. Turn, therefore, to the door that is open—the normal continuation of your life in closer union with God, on lines already well tried and blessed, with open doors leading onward in the path you have already been treading, to the throne of God. St. Teresa said she would have been thankful to have been led by the ordinary ways of God, and if *you* are not thankful I am very thankful for you. Only throw yourself into it with heart and will, and the solid assurance that you are on the right path.

The following letters were written to various friends at times of sorrow and loss.

14

To a Friend who had lost her Father

August 30, 1888.

I have only just received ——'s letter, telling of your sad and sudden loss. A protracted illness *seems* to prepare one for the end, though when it comes, even after months of illness, it always seems sudden and terrible. I think death is always terrible, even in what is looked upon as its most peaceful and calmest forms. The one thing that Christian faith enables us to do, is to hold fast by God through it all in trust and faith—seeing through the grave as Christianity alone can enable us to do, and believing in God's goodness and mercy. I think the one thing we have to trust to and believe in with all our might is God's love for us. 'He knoweth whereof we are made and remembereth that we are but dust, and is not extreme to mark what is done amiss.' We talk of charitable judgments, but what man judges another with the charity that God does—seeing excuses and goodness when no eye but His could see it. Let nothing shake you in that—he whom I love is gone to One who loves him more than I do, and who will be more tender to him—He who has proved His Love—first by creating and then by dying for him. I think we often forget the *necessary* Love involved in the act of creation. Everyone loves what he makes and overestimates his own handicraft. God too *must* love what He has brought into existence and given life to.

God forbid, my dear child, that I should tell you not to weep or grieve for him who is taken from you. I would only say, 'Sorrow not as those that have no

hope.' When your grief is deepest, still look up, and if you shed your tears at the Feet of Christ there will be no bitterness, no lack of faith in them, and when your heart is sorest you will have peace in the midst of it all. 'I *know* Him in Whom I have believed' —how much that involves. Do not think that God would take anyone at a disadvantage, or that because death came suddenly it was not directed by God's Love as much as if it came after months of preparation. We may be quite sure that death takes us at our best, not our worst; it is the *character* as it stands at the time of judgment, not merely the last moments or the last days, that God looks at. The many appearances of death, more or less frightful, are not the things that we are to dwell upon so much as the going forth of the soul with the preparation and discipline of years.

I hope when you are able you will write me a line and tell me whatever you care to tell me; you know how interested I shall be, and you may be sure that I shall remember your father at the Altar. What a comfort to believe in the progress of the soul after death—its growth in knowledge and love—the inpouring of light—and that we are not cut off from the acts of greatest charity towards those who are gone before, but can help them by our prayers and alms.

15

To the Same on the Loss of her Mother

January 8, 1895.

Words seem very poor things at such a time of trouble as yours, and yet they are all one can use

to tell of one's sympathy. Sorrow and suffering do draw friends together, as our Lord chose them as the way to draw us to Himself. Death is always terrible and always come unexpectedly, however long one has been expecting and preparing for it—indeed, those long times of nursing only make the gap more terribly felt when it comes. It is not wrong to feel it keenly if only our tears and complaints can be poured forth at the Feet of our Lord—'Lord, He whom Thou lovest is sick'—and 'If Thou hadst been here my brother had not died.' And then He points on to the Resurrection. That is the source of comfort, the *certainty* of what lies beyond—we do not hope, we *know*; if only He will come to us in our trouble and sorrow and point to the Resurrection, show it to us, make us feel and know the rest beyond the grave, our tears may flow, but all the bitterness will be gone. If Faith begins looking with tears into the grave the grave will grow lighter, we shall see the vision of angels. 'Your sorrow shall be turned into joy'—that Good Friday was a terrible night for the Apostles, but it tested their faith and trust, and it was literally *turned into* joy. Don't think or say that your life is ended and its employment gone—such a training as you have had will help to make your life full of usefulness and unselfish work. Sorrow, indeed, does either drive one in upon oneself and hurt one, or drives one out to others; it gives the key to most people's hearts, it breaks down barriers and gives just that touch of human sympathy which nothing else can give. I do not fear for you—God will take care of you and fill your life full of the power of being a blessing to many yet.

16

To another Friend who had lost her Father

February 23, 1914.

I only heard on Saturday of your great loss, and want to tell you that you have all my sympathy and affection in your sorrow. You will miss him even more than an ordinary person would, because of your constant care for him during all these years of ill-health. I did not know that he had been more unwell than usual, so that it was all the more of a shock.

How long ago it seems since I first knew him, and used to think then he could not live long; and I used to enjoy so much his dry humour and admire his patience in those long attacks of the heart. Well, my dear child, the only real source of consolation at such a time is in one's faith and trust in God. Death brings the other world so bewilderingly vividly before us, and imagination feels so powerless to form any picture of the life beyond the grave, that when anyone whom one knows intimately dies, the mind is apt to strain itself in the effort to follow and realise what kind of life it is. You know his interests and tastes and ways of thought, and you feel bewildered to place him in conditions which are impossible to realise. But there is one thing you can rest upon, that he is with our Lord Who loved him and died for him, and under His loved hand he is being led on to more perfect knowledge and a more complete happiness than he has ever known here. We know so little of details, and perhaps if we knew more it would make it all the more puzzling; but you knew him and you know our Lord, and what are any details compared with the safety and security with which you can leave

him in His hands. I will remember him at the Altar, and though I do not often see you I never can forget all the kindness you showed me years ago. . . .

God bless you.

17

To the Same

June 12, 1914.

Thank you so much for sending me the little memoir. It is so good and simple and true. I cannot imagine a greater trial than for a man to know he had talents and to be constantly kept back by ill-health from using them. I used to feel how terribly difficult it was for him to be so often stopped in the middle of his work and laid aside, and he certainly bore it like a man and a Christian. I never heard him complain, and he certainly never showed the smallest sign of being embittered. And how you must miss him—more and more at first, and all the more because you had to look after him so much. After all, it's the daily round of life with all the little things that make it up from morning to evening and the intimate companionship that is woven more and more closely year by year—it's this that is broken in upon, and whatever else we look forward to in the other world, it will not be *this*—and you must sometimes wonder if Heaven itself can make up for the joy of life, with all its disappointments and troubles, in this dear old earth. The very perfection of the other world, I suppose, often makes us feel as if we prefer those we have loved and known well, imperfections and all! . . .

18

To a Friend on the Anniversary of her Sister's Death

December 1908.

I must just write you one line to say how much I shall be thinking of you to-morrow, and especially at the Mass. These anniversaries are so terrible, bringing back one by one the details of the past, moment by moment; and I know how you suffered this time last year. But the grave, however dark, has the other side to the eye of faith; while the Magdalene looked into the grave and wept she saw the vision of Angels, and the empty Tomb, and the Presence of our Lord—and so can we. As we look on and pray and weep gradually Faith gives the clearer vision, and around it, through it, we see the light of joy for those we love. 'He is not here'—so said the Angels, and those we love are not in the tomb but the land of light and peace. On this side of the grave there are weeping friends and breaking hearts, but of those for whom we weep we can at times get glimpses where there is no more sorrow nor weeping nor any more grief, for God has wiped away all tears from their eyes. A year on earth measured by the progress of a soul that has gone to God must bring such progress of sanctity and knowledge that we can scarcely imagine it.

19

To a Friend whose Sister was going through a Time of great Bodily Pain

[Undated.]

I am indeed sorry to hear that your sister is suffering so much again and that the improvement

was so short-lived; it must be wearing and exhausting.

It is comparatively easy to brace oneself to bear pain for a time, but a fearful ordeal to find it go on indefinitely. I always think of suffering in relation to Satan's challenge to God: 'Doth Job serve God for nought, try him, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.' The challenge, unheard by Job, as to whether he did not serve God for what he got from Him. The challenge, in other words, whether men love God for Himself or His gifts. To that challenge God's answer was, very well, try him, I trust him; but he limited Satan first to test him through loss of external things, and when he had proved faithful, he allowed him to be tested through bodily and mental suffering of the acutest form. He was, unknown to himself, witnessing to the unseen world how man can love God, and at the same time his own faith was being purified and cleansed. Who knows how far-reaching your sister's sufferings may prove, as a witness to God in this world and the other. But the real test is that the sufferer cannot see its meaning or why he is tested. Perhaps Satan has challenged God as to what kind of faith and love she has, and she is proving by her effort to be patient how real and deep it is. I wish I could help her; but when it comes to the deepest things no one can give real help but God.

20

Letter to One who had been passing through a Series of Severe Trials

[Undated.]

How God has been trying you of late—one thing after another. What does it mean?—yet it surely does mean something. It certainly makes one feel the

uncertainty of *everything*, and makes one *know*, even if one can't feel, that time dwindles into insignificance as eternity looms up before us. And yet what is eternity, and what influence can it have upon us, but a cold and dreary waste which we can't even try to fill up by our imagination without God. A great all-satisfying Person makes eternity tingle with life, and furnishes and warms it; we can't imagine it, except with the thought and love of God. We may dread and fear death, and shudder to look out beyond it into the unknown—and it is unknown—unthinkable —impossible to imagine, except as filled with a Presence which changes everything. Certainly He has been training you, at any rate in detachment—first one thing and then another, and now this; and in the time of uncertainty you can only try to love and cling to the Will of God whatever it may be.

How each of these letters bears the impress of the person to whom it is written! The writer seems in each case to feel the character with which he is in touch, always with the same aim of bringing God nearer and making each soul realise Him as the true comforter. The next letter is to a friend undergoing a long and severe illness.

21

December 31, 1893.

I have so wanted to tell you how much I think of all you have had to and still are suffering—now just on the threshold of the New Year, may I write just a line.

You have had so much to bear for so long, it must make one ask is there not a reason? and to me the

reason seems almost plain. Some have to work with hand or heart or brain, others have to do even more work, through suffering. It was not our Lord's words or even His love which saved the world, but His Cross and Passion. May it not be true that one should believe humbly that ——'s [her brother] extraordinary power is in some sort gained and blessed through what you have had to bear for so long. We know how truly if one member suffer 'spiritually' all the members suffer with it. We can't, I think, doubt that much of the active work of the Church at home and in the missions is held up and blessed through those who suffer hiddenly in hidden homes and on hospital beds. People don't think of them or even thank God for them, when they rejoice in the work of some great teacher or bishop; but it may be God's eyes are resting on those sufferers, and because of what they are striving to bear so bravely God blesses the work. Spiritual relationships are strong, but when they are also bound up with natural relationships they must be stronger, and so, who can tell how much work you are doing for God while you are simply lying in bed, and feeling as if you could not bear it all much longer. So many men in ———'s position, and with his extraordinary gift, get spoilt—people run after such a man till his life gets lowered and dragged down. I scarcely knew him till yesterday, and to-day, when I saw how truly power was going out of him, I like to think that you are allowed to hold up his hands, as two unknown men held up the hands of Moses while the battle went on. I do not think there is anything the least unreal in such a thought, nor should it rob one of the true and proper human desire and hope to get well. But I think it does give hope as long as one is ill, and enables one to see while one lies like a log, unable to do anything but endure, and offer it to God, that such time is not

wasted;—and may God give you in the New Year many blessings for all your kindness to me. . . .

22

To the Same

October 24, 1894.

I have just been reading one of Mr. Carter's Meditations, where he says our Lord taught us that the life of the creature consisted in entire dependence upon God's will, seen only in the ordinary circumstances of life, and the need of the open eye of faith to be able to see God's will in such things, or anything but chance. But when faith does get a glimpse of God's will, 'a thread of eternity running through and combining all the chances of time,' there we get the key to the mystery, not indeed so as to understand things, but so as to be able to accept them. He told Peter when he was young he planned his own life with more or less self-will, 'but when thou shalt be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not'—life's training leading to the spirit of acceptance. I was thinking the other day how strangely God seems to deal with all of you, so much trouble and suffering; but there is the other side, the wonderful blessing that follows all ——'s work. . . .

23

To the Same

March 5, 1900.

I am so very sorry to hear of all your trouble again, but I hope the worst is over. . . . But you are

evidently not of those whose way through life is to be always smooth and calm. The smooth times don't last very long with you—do they? I am just preparing a sermon for this afternoon on 'Your sorrow shall be turned into joy,' and the thought I want to bring out is that Religion is not meant to point us to Heaven as a place where the trials of earth will find their compensation, but it is meant to be a power by which we can force the hand of sorrow and trouble to bless us—a power that enables us by the use of it to *turn* the sorrow into joy, to make the material that works us ill bring us joy. It's easy to see that it ought and can, but it's not so easy to practise it.

The thought in the next letter of convalescence as the 'Amen' to an illness must, one feels, have won a smile and been a real help to dwell on at that weary time.

24

January 6, 1894.

I do hope, please God, you are beginning to mend a little by this time, you have had such a long and such a trying time; but it is almost more difficult to be patient and loving when convalescent than when one is ill. The returning power of life and everything in life looks bright and hopeful—but our part is to wait upon God. The end of illness you might call its Amen, and wait till the Amen is well said, so as not to spoil the prayer! I have so often seen people putting on their gloves and looking about while saying the last Amen, and so spoiling it all; but you will finish up your illness well and get all its blessing. It must be a great blessing that God has in store for so long and so trying a time. I remember you very often in my prayers, and I hope

you will sometimes remember me. The prayers of the sick are like the prayers of Our Lord on the Cross, and have a special blessing.

The four following letters were written to a friend who was a teacher. They dwell on the value of acts of the will—done independently of and in spite of the feelings. In the second letter Father Maturin analyses the meaning of Our Lord's temptations, and in them all he applies the principles of Our Lord's victory to the facts of his correspondent's own life.

25

February 23, 1891.

You may be *quite* sure, I think, that God does not reject an offering because it has taken you some time to make up your mind to make it, and whatever the cause of your feeling it does not come from your offering being rejected.

It is, I think, quite natural that when one has made, or is trying to make, an offering that costs one a good deal, one should feel very cold and loveless, for two reasons:

(1) The reaction after a struggle of the kind often leaves one spiritually numbed and powerless to feel.

(2) The testing of the will, by the withdrawal of all those aids to choice that come through feeling and emotion and love. Some of the greatest acts of life have to be done simply with the reason telling one it's necessary, or conscience with its unimpassioned voice bidding us do what costs us all we love. And then if the will unaided obeys, it's like a lever lifting the whole weight of our being to a higher moral standard.

But at such times there's no emotion, no sense of exultation or of triumph, the nature is left, as it were, to recover its footing and to regain breath; the sense of peace comes later. When our Lord did the greatest act of honour and the most acceptable ever performed, He cried out, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.'

26

March 19, 1892.

I do not know that any explanation of the Temptation of our Lord is quite satisfactory. Two things are of faith:

(1) Jesus Christ was God, therefore He *could* not have sinned.

(2) His temptation was a very real one.

Two things constitute a temptation—a *desire*, which is *opposed* to a *command* of God; if there's no desire it's not a temptation at all. I could not say I am tempted to murder, for I have no such desire. And if there's no command of God forbidding it's no temptation, for there would be no harm in yielding. It's not a temptation to eat when the time for food comes, as there is nothing to forbid one to eat. These two things our Lord must have experienced—a desire to do a thing which was against the command of God.

Our Lord couldn't have been tempted to a breach of the moral law—that would have been no temptation to Him. Such a temptation could only be possible to a fallen creature, because to break the moral law is to hurt one's own nature. But if God forbid a thing not in *itself* wrong, *there* would be the possibility of a temptation. For instance, in *itself* there would have been nothing wrong in Adam eating the

forbidden tree; it was wrong only because God forbade it. Many things a child may be forbidden to do, not wrong in themselves, only because they are forbidden.

Now, the substance of all our Lord's temptations in the wilderness was to save the world without His Passion—that's what underlay it all; and our Lord in His human nature shrank from such pain. We know it cost Him the Agony as it drew near. We know He prayed if it were possible He might escape—He wanted then to escape; but He couldn't without sin; therefore He absolutely *couldn't*, and He *knew* it was impossible. But the bringing His will into entire acceptance surely was meritorious. Take one instance. I may be paralysed for the rest of my life. I know there's no escape; but I may long to escape and give in to that longing, or I may bring my will into entire acceptance of the will of God—that would be meritorious. I know that our Lord underwent a fearful conflict which caused His Agony, and that He asked if it were possible to escape, and then I see Him calm and strong. He has wholly accepted God's will. Surely there is merit, though He couldn't have sinned. We must not think of the first temptation as a temptation merely to satisfy His hunger. It was to use His divine power to help human nature against the sufferings of the fall—to use miracles in a way forbidden.

I am afraid I am not very clear. I think one must look upon His human nature as being, as it were, left to itself. He speaks throughout as man. He may have shut out from His human nature the conscious supports of His divine, and it had to accept that will. Besides, the being willing to enter into such a position, through the Incarnation, was meritorious. He might have entered life and lived as

Adam before the Fall, but His being content to endure all except the defilement of sin was an act of merit. The real test is the keeping on all the interest in your work whatever its results. Remember when you say 'There's not much love in the surrender,' you mean, not much feeling of love. You wouldn't do it unless you loved. You wouldn't make such an offering for a person you didn't care for. The test of the reality of one's love is, what will you bear for God, and, too, in a matter such as you speak of there may be times when you will have no realisation of making any offering at all—the wish to have all as you want will come back again and again, but that doesn't mean you have withdrawn the offering—renew it till it becomes a habit of your mind; fight your way to the peace that lies beyond, and it will come when least you expect it.

You know I am always glad to help you any time and any way in my power.

27

To the Same

June 29, 1894.

I know how difficult it is to keep up to the mark when one is deprived of the helps one is used to, and it must be difficult for you with comparatively few celebrations. I always feel there is much comfort to be got out of our Lord's message in the Apocalypse to the Church of Pergamum, 'I know thy works and where thou dwellest.' The difficulties of our position and surroundings are not forgotten in the judgment which our Lord passes upon our life, but of course all depends upon whether we fall under or rise through

our circumstances. No doubt such a position as yours has many worries and anxieties, but looking at it from the outside glimpse I got on Wednesday it seemed very delightful! . . .

28

To the Same

February 11, 1901.

When I had charge of a parish I used often to feel that anyone in a position of authority, and especially a position in which one's work was largely to help others, could never be expected to be allowed by the devil to help people except on the condition of paying for it, and the price is one of two things—either suffering or sin. The same as with our Lord, bend the knee to the devil and he will withdraw opposition; fight him, and he will make us suffer for it.

And with your work it must be the same. There is no greater work of enmity against the devil than that of laying the foundation of strong religious principles in children. If your work is worth anything, look to yourself, for you will be the object of attack. If you bend the knee to him, take a worldly tone, seek success rather than what is best; you may have personally an easy time. If you strive after what is the best and highest you must expect trouble—trouble in the house or in yourself. And if he fails in dragging you down by great temptation he will try to weary you out by the method of 'pin-pricks.' It's easier to stand out against great things than small; these little constant worries appeal to nothing heroic or strong, and yet it is under them that real heroism and real strength is developed. Don't, therefore, be surprised at such things happening

to show the presence of a very subtle and persistent foe. If one is trying to work for our Lord, one must expect Satan to try one as he tried Him, and if you will not yield and sin, you must be prepared for such suffering as these worries. 'As He was so are we in this world,' and especially so if we are trying to carry out His work in others. And so your great protection and shelter is the Incarnation—uniting yourself with Him so you will see clearly, and gain strength and shelter.

The same thought of the testing of our work for God is found in this letter to a friend who had founded and was maintaining a home for destitute children.

29

November 25, 1913.

. . . How you will miss Dr. ——. He was a good friend to you and the Home, and what you will do without him I don't know; but I am sure you will be sent someone, perhaps not so sympathetic and nice, but someone who can look after the Home. I expect you are intended to stand more alone and to find your help and support in God alone. When the sapling begins to grow the outward prop is taken away that it may develop its own strength and learn to face the storms. You have had a pretty hard year, and this coming at the end of it makes it harder to bear, but 'according to thy day so shall thy strength be,' and only those whom God knows and trusts does he test severely. Perhaps if He had asked you, you would not have had the courage to say Yes, so He did it without asking you. But all you go through of suffering and loss will bring a richer blessing upon

the Home, I'm sure of that. Anyone who undertakes a work for God has the value of the work tested in herself, and must bear suffering and loss, or must endure temptation. Even our Lord, before He began His ministry, underwent the temptations. The devil tried Him, to see if His work was worth anything. The head of every work is its spiritual representative, and its weakness or strength is tested through its head ; and, please God, all you have gone through this year will bring a great blessing upon the Home.

In this letter comes a favourite thought—that each person's circumstances are chosen by God as the best possible for the development of that character.

30

May 27, 1893.

What a contrast your life where you are now must be to your life in London !—the country is very beautiful and most soothing to one's nerves and inspiring to one's thoughts. But I have a most degrading and earthly love for chimney-pots and crowded streets and noise ! I think with all its beauty it has probably not a few trials for you. If only one can see God's will ordering all things for us—shown, not by any startling providences, but as in the Life of our Lord by the silent movement of events. It is the mind that sees through the eye that makes all the difference, the same scene looks very different to different people because of the mind with which they interpret. God shows us His will as much by what He gives us to do as by what He keeps us back from, and we have to take the limits of our life as

an indication of what we are *not* to do. His one desire is the perfecting of our character, that it may be what He designed it to be at our creation, and He will send us and withhold from us all that will tend to this—all else is secondary. If sickness be more for our good than health, or a quiet life than an active one, He will send us what is best for this end. He does care for our temporal joys and sorrows, every hair of our heads is numbered, but all is subservient to His one great purpose, and as our wills more and more come to agree with His our life is filled with peace. The things that we naturally might like most to do *might* carry us away and weaken our character, then He steps in and stops it; so the place which is the very best for us is possibly the worst; it is the place where everything around us is ordered for our perfection. If we rise up to it, it will sanctify us; if we don't, it will crush us.

Again, in the next letter, Father Maturin dwells on the power of the will and the need to develop by action our powers of faith and love.

31

November 23, 1900.

Our Lord's words in regard to love are clear: 'This is the love of God that ye *do* whatsoever I command you.' Both the sign of love and the means of gaining it is by *doing*. Feeling and emotion is a help, but a most unsafe test. Many whose love is deep and true—true enough to die for our Lord—have little sensible love. It is with religion as with other things: you may have a real talent for music, but if you never practise it it will die, and often you

may have to drive yourself to the piano, and find little but repugnance to the study, but if you go on the joy and the love will come. So you may have—nay, you have—the power of loving God above all things and, if you are baptized, you have the gift of faith. But whether these powers will ever develop to the full, or develop at all, depends upon whether you *force* yourself to the practice of religion—prayer, holy reading, thinking of God and holy things. The greatest power of faith and love to God will duly develop by *practice*, by doing what they demand. You say your church-going is irregular, or there is no obligation—surely, whatever your religion, there is the obligation to go to your church. 'Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together' St. Paul says. What I should advise you to do is to make and *keep* a rule about prayer, church-going, and the duties of religion. Have your times of prayer whether you are in the humour for it or not. You are *learning* to speak with God. So with every religious duty. Have times, keep to them, persevere in them, and you will be astonished to find how much you learn, and how much more stable you grow. Such a rule will bridge you over times of laxity and coldness if you keep it, and the joy and love will come in good time.

Again, in estimating our contrition for past sin, it is at the *will* we have to look and not the feelings.

32

January 4, 1895.

I do not believe that anyone has a right to say few will be saved; our Blessed Lord, when the question was

directly put to Him, 'Are there few that be saved?' refused to answer. He gave a practical and personal answer, 'You must strive.' All the texts quoted to prove it appear to me to prove the opposite. 'Many are called, but few chosen'; this comes at the end of the householder who hired labourers, and the parable shows only one class lost—even those called at the eleventh hour saved. It is impossible, therefore, that the deduction from the parable is meant to contradict the parable itself. And therefore the words 'Many are called,' etc., must mean something else, perhaps the rejection of the majority of the Jews. Remember, the sorrow that comes from fear is good, so far as it goes. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' You must try to let the sense of fear lead you on—ask God for the grace of true contrition. It is good to remember that contrition is not necessarily accompanied with feelings of sorrow; sin is the turning of the will from God, repentance the turning the will *to* God. If with all your heart you turn from sin, however constantly old temptations may return, and long to be truly sorry, you have contrition—let it lead you to bear the results of sin patiently, that is the best of all. When the memory of the past makes one patient, slow to judge others, ready to accept troubles, one has indeed then very deep contrition if one feels as cold as ice. It will be a help to remember that as sin is an act of the will so is repentance—'Turn ye unto Me.' Conversion is the turning round of the will Godward. Do not allow yourself to feel that God *can* turn from a soul that desires to approach Him. The fear of hell, remember, is good, but whenever you think of it try to picture Our Lord standing at the door of hell saying, 'None need enter here who only ask My help and believe that I can help them.

I think God has shown you wonderful love and helped you in ways that others do not seem to have been helped, and I am sure this illness comes from His mercy.

The following letter is a characteristic instance of Father Maturin's imaginative grasp of the Apostles' lives and characters, which made those who heard him preach feel they were constantly getting to know intimately these friends of the preacher. And what a note of comfort it strikes for one on the threshold of old age !

33

January 17, 1902.

I always think of St. John as the wonderful type of people who may have their chief work to do when it seems to them as if their work was done. He faced death and came back and lingered on with his strength seemingly gone and the thunder silent, and yet the work he did in his last years is the work we know him by better than that of his earlier years. It all seemed useless to him no doubt ; it would have been better that he had died at the Latin gate than lived into weakness and solitude. Yet all that went before was the preparation for what he did in the end. And so no doubt with those who have been near to death and looked it in the face and come back again to life : there is some need in oneself, and some need for others, and no doubt these two go hand in hand, but be sure one will not be very conscious of it. One will only know that God is using the discipline to tame and discipline and sanctify one. All healthy deepening is gradual, habits form slowly under the old habits like the chrysalis, and are only visible as the old drop off

to give place to the new, but the power of one's life goes out from one's inner struggles to illuminate and draw others on.

II

Most of the letters that follow are concerned with questions of faith, and are written in answer to correspondents who were in difficulties either as to any belief in the Christian Church, or as to where was to be found the seat of that Church's authority.

It is interesting to see from these letters, written at very different dates, that Father Maturin never changed in his view or the general line of his advice to those hesitating between Anglicanism and Rome. To those who consulted him he always answered, even before he himself had left the Church of England: 'If you are convinced of the claims of Rome, go.' On the other hand, even after he was himself a Catholic, he would say: 'If you are *not* clearly convinced, stay where you are for the present.' And he would always add: 'Try to get nearer to God, use the spiritual helps that you have, and God will show you His will in His own good time.'

The first set of these letters was written to a lady who had doubts as to the Christian Revelation, but was attracted to Theism.

The earlier letters were written from Cowley, the later when Father Maturin was himself a Catholic, and these latter deal with the question of the Church's claims. His correspondent passed from Theism to

Anglicanism, but at the date of Father Maturin's last letter to her had not reached faith in the Catholic and Roman Church.

34

April 1, 1891.

I sent you a volume of Liddon's Sermons which I happened to have with me, as I thought some of them might help you. I am sending you Salmon's book to-day. If you don't find it readable please don't read it, but it struck me as being one of the most convincing books I know. I shall often remember you in my prayers, and shall continue to believe—unless you prove it otherwise—that all will yet come right with you. I think it will, for I believe you to be sincere, which I am afraid a good many in a like condition of mind are not. You will not, I hope, hesitate to write to me at any time that you think I can help you.

35

To the Same

April 7, 1891.

I should be glad if I could in any way be the means of clearing your mind of some very false impressions of what is involved in Christian faith. Did I not know you, and feel quite sure of your earnestness from the tone of your conversation with me, I should have gathered from some things in your letter that you were prejudiced against, and liked to press things hard against, the Christian system. I do not attribute such motives, but I think I can trace very plainly in what you say the teachings of Voysey, who I am bound to

say, from what you sent me of his, does not leave upon my mind a pleasing impression either of integrity or of temper. There *are* difficulties in the Christian system, but he has not stated them; and when a man gets angry and bitter towards his opponent I always have the feeling of a loss of confidence! Certainty of being in the right can afford to be patient with those who are known to be in the wrong.

Now, first as to one or two things you say. You speak of God eternally tormenting men for their ignorance, and you instance Shelley; and then His rewarding some ignorant man 'who had no wish to lead a pure life because he believed in Christ.' Surely you don't really think that such a doctrine is Christian? Our Lord says distinctly, 'That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.'

Therefore, as a Christian, I should say that a man who lived up to his lights and wanted to believe all that was true, and was faithful to conscience, will have a far happier eternity than a man who knew and firmly believed, and did not try to live up to his faith—'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them,' 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifyeth.' It's possible for men to be serving Christ even without knowing it. 'Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee?' said those on the Right Hand—and the answer, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' You were serving Me in serving men. They were better than they knew. Be just to what our Lord does teach. Don't overstate the case for your side, for that looks like prejudice, and a little prejudice, we know but too well, may keep one back from the very best

and truest things life has. I for one should be very sorry to believe that a man like Shelley was lost. There are two ways of rejecting Christ that one feels must be condemned. One, rejecting through moral unfitness—not being true to conscience, not living such a life as would enable one to appreciate perfect holiness—then the mind becomes biassed and wishes to dwell on the hard side, and finds itself morally incapable of believing, because 'the eye is evil'—as our Lord said, 'They repented not that they might believe'; the other is a rejection because one doesn't want to believe. But difficulties in believing—that some very earnest people have, like St. Monica—who love even in their doubts. Of these no hard word is ever said by Christ, but the reverse.

You say 'Christianity drags one down to the earth. Theism shows us the wonder of God, His love and pity to all mankind.' Indeed, dear friend, Theism does no such thing. The remarkable thing about Theism such as you and Voysey profess is, that you take the Christian God and call Him the God of Theists. Theism knows very little about God—that is, the God of Natural Religion—what do we know of this God? If you would get the answer you must turn to the heathen world, and to those parts of the world to-day which are not in contact with Christianity, and we find very little indeed about the Love of God—equally little about His justice. Shut your eyes to the Bible Revelation, and can you tell me from what you see of God's government of the world that He is even just—no; as to mercy, I see no token of it; as to love, there are *tokens* of love indeed, but 'nature red in tooth and claw with rapine, shrieks against the Creed' that God is love. Go outside of the influence of Christianity and you find no one has such theories of God's mercy and love as you profess. The fact is that Christian ethics

and Christian theology have percolated into all systems in contact with Christianity, and people take the attributes of God that Christianity has taught them, as if they learnt them from Nature and not Revelation. It was a Jew who said in his perplexity : ' I was grieved at the wicked. I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity. . . . They come in no misfortune . . . neither are they plagued like other men. . . . Then thought I to understand this : but it was too hard for me.' And it certainly is too hard for Voysey, except by taking what he had learnt from Christianity and calling it Theism. I should like to know where Voysey learnt to admire ' the beauty and wisdom of God's moral government of the world in allowing pain and sin to administer to an eternal progress, and if we had no such enemy to fight we should never rise above the level of the brute creation.' Where did he find out all this ?—from Revelation. I absolutely deny that experience teaches that pain and sin help towards man's elevation ; they *can* do so by the grace of Christ, but their natural tendency is to drag downwards. What does nature unaided tell you of the effects of pain ? Go into our prisons and hospitals—it tells only a story of ' degradation, ugliness, and tears.' What does Mr. Voysey learn of its possibilities [apart] from Christianity, that all things work together for good, but only to them who have the spirit of submission and acceptance—in other words, ' to them that love God ' ? What one word of comfort and encouragement can Mr. Voysey give a suffering member of his flock ? I come to him in bodily and mental suffering, I ask why is this ? He says, it's to ' minister to your eternal progress.' I ask, how do you know ?—it is at present only dragging me down and making me curse my fate. He says God's mercy sends it to you. I ask who told you ? I see no mercy, I only see

cruelty, and that's what ninety-nine men out of a hundred see. Again I ask him, are you certain about this eternity—have you any proof of its existence? He must answer, none. I am not certain, I can only hope. Again I ask, what harm, then, if I seek for alleviation of my pain in every form of self-indulgence or even sin, will it affect my eternity? He can only answer, I can tell you nothing for certain, I can only give you my opinion; and if he speaks truly he must add, my opinion and convictions I grant you are different from those of all other Theists who have not come in contact with Christianity.

If Christian Revelation be not true we are where Plato and Aristotle and all the rest of them stood, and where the heathen stand to-day. Do try to grasp that—the idea of a merciful God is unknown outside of Christianity. The idea of God's being loved I do not think can be found except with Jews and Christians and those to whom God revealed Himself. No, you know *nothing*; there's more to make you believe God is cruel, in nature, than that He is love—more to make you believe He is indifferent to man's moral state than that He cares for man to be good; everything to make us despair, little to lead us to hope. Try to shut your eyes to all but what you would see in the world and in yourself, and tell me if the sight is an encouraging one. Then look at Christianity telling us a great catastrophe has fallen upon our nature, which God, preserving our liberty, tries to undo by Himself taking our nature; all is the same, only through all a thread of light and hope shines. God is not punishing the world for one man's sin, but, as Voysey says, allowing—nay, ensuring—a means by which 'sin and pain can minister to man's eternal progress'—only this is affected through the Incarnation.

I must not write more, but I shall be glad if you will

write to me any time you feel you want to. I hope I haven't said anything harsh of Voysey, but I confess I felt some indignation at what he must have known, or ought to have known, to be gross misrepresentation and at his calling his Christian theology, that he has learnt from Christ, by the false name of Theism. You may always say to me just what you think, I shall never be shocked !

36

To the Same

May 27, 1891.

Try as far as possible to avoid reading the Old Testament or things that suggest difficulties—those questions are not to be considered till one's mind is in a more receptive state. When one has grasped the great principles, small details fall into their proper place ; where one begins by such details they become out of proportion in their seeming importance. The whole study of the planetary system is perplexing and bewildering till one has grasped the law of gravitation, then all is clear. And the Incarnation is to the Christian system what gravitation is to the physical.

Still, I have little fear but that all will yet come right with you—a pure heart and a good conscience cannot lead one astray. I remember you very often in my prayers.

37

To the Same

June 9, 1891.

It was strange my getting your letter just when I was about to write to you. I do not feel either

discouraged or surprised at what you say. I do not expect, it would be very strange, if you were to get your faith all clear so soon. The mind works by its own laws, and you have got your mind, partly probably by habit, partly by temperament, into a condition in which it spontaneously criticises and lays hold of a certain set of ideas—you will not get out of this without much effort, often seemingly fruitless effort. *You* perhaps will not accept [this], but I believe two things must co-operate that you may see God and know Him. First, an earnest and painstaking effort on your part (which I believe you are honestly making), an effort both moral and intellectual; and, secondly, what I am sure will follow, the help of God's illuminating grace. I bid you at midnight turn your eyes eastward, and after watching long you say there's no use, I can see nothing, but I say go on looking; you say there's nothing to see, I say still look; you look, and at last the first streak of light, then the heavens aglow, then all the scenery around is illuminated. What was needed was, on your part, to keep your eyes turned to the east, and then the light. So I beg you only persevere trying; all good things are worth hard struggles and a heavy price—this is the best of all and worth the greatest struggle. Of course you can't keep things from coming into your mind, but you can keep your mind from dwelling on them. It's strange the things you specially notice in the 'Treasury.' I did not think of them, nor was it for that I recommended it, but for the prayers. You're not bound to believe *everything* in any book in order to get help from it—take what helps you, and ignore or reject the rest. What you say is quite true—worship the God of your own ideal; so far as I know it's the God I worship too, and the God of the Christian Church. The other God whom you have

created by your imagination out of certain passages in the Old Testament is a God who doesn't exist. Let Him *die,* and cling to the God you honour and reverence. He is the true God, the other is a phantom ! Poor Jael ! I admire her very much. I see nothing so hateful in a lonely woman trying to protect herself against her enemy as a woman only could protect herself : if it were not in the Bible, I believe *you* would admire her ! I should admire you, in time of war, if you had the courage to act so against the enemy of your country, and he who would destroy the worship of your God.

. . . . . .

Surely no one ever loved God as a Christian *can,* and no one ever found such a conception of God as St. John or St. Paul (I think even you would grant that), yet they both were brought up upon the Old Testament. Therefore the teaching of the Old Testament does not of necessity leave so terrible an impression on everyone's mind as it has on yours ! Think this out—the highest and most spiritual conception of God that the world has ever known was given to the world by men trained in the Old Testament. And you will please not forget that that beautiful God, that you were taught was the God of Theism, is the God that Theists only believe in so far as they believe in the Revelation of Christ—don't forget that. The fact is, your mind is really steeped in the spirit of Christianity and you have got hold of some isolated fragments of the Old Testament that seem to you to mar the beauty of your Christian ideal. Well, I beg you cling to your ideal. You wouldn't have it if you weren't born in a Christian land—worship, love, pray to *that* God, and don't bother your head about what seems to mar His perfection ; you're

not a Jew, you're a Christian, so let the Jews go their way! I won't ask you now to say you believe in the Old Testament, because your idea of it is exaggerated and really amounts to being untrue. Don't try to force your mind into believing in a God that seems hateful to you; keep hold of the God you feel you do believe in, and pray to Him earnestly for the knowledge of perfect truth. Now, I think you can't accuse me of being narrow-minded! Yet I am quite sincere in what I say.

So now take courage: say your prayers—don't try to force yourself to believe—*do* all you know you ought—keep your mind, and above all your heart, open to conviction and to illumination. 'He that doeth the Commandment shall know of the doctrine.' I don't feel the least discouraged at anything you have said. I would rather much you would be *quite* honest and open; don't work yourself into an unreal state of mind—the light will come if you turn your eyes towards it. Perhaps the clouds will roll away in a moment and you'll see all clearly, or perhaps a slow, quiet conviction will creep over your soul, but the time will come, I know, when you will say like the Samaritan, 'Now I believe, not because thou didst tell me, but because I have seen with my own eyes.' I pray God nearly every day that you may have that light—whether sooner or later we may leave to Him. If the struggle is long, your character will grow all the more by the length of the struggle; if you die struggling, though all is darker than ever, yet you will have won the battle. The only defeat possible is the deliberate abandonment of effort, and God will keep you from that.

38

To the Same

June 16, 1891.

I found the following quotation in my note-book by accident. I don't know where I took it from.

'It is true men can't find their belief suddenly by an effort of will, so as not to believe what they dislike, and to believe what they wish; but it is also true that a moral bias within has the greatest influence on the decisions of the understanding. The two powers though distinct closely react upon one another. Men can choose and refuse to listen to the evidence in the court of the soul; they can play the part of advocate and browbeat witnesses whose evidence they dislike, and follow blindly all that favours the issue they desire to follow. Sceptical minds can make mountains out of molehills, and vault with ease over mountains of evidence that stand in their way.'

I think we all feel how true this is in some people we know; it's hard often to see how true it is in ourselves.

I told you, you will remember some day, that I never doubted you will one day come out of the furnace purified and strong.

39

To the Same

September 6, 1891.

As to the sense of almost impossibility to believe that God could take man's nature, two things you must remember:

(1) Such feeling of awe and amazement is right and may be a help to reverent faith. It was what David felt when he considered the moon and the stars which God ordained: 'When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained. What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man that thou visitest him?' The Bible therefore recognises and gives a place to such feelings of wonder.

(2) But we must remember also that we do not really know what man is. It is generally believed that when God made man first it was with the intention of Himself taking that nature—the Passion, etc., was a result of man's sin, but the Incarnation probably was always part of God's plan. Therefore man's nature has an important place in God's eternal plan. We see ourselves here struggling with sin, but we do not know what we are or what we are capable of; we indeed feel that however great the world it is not to be compared for value to one human life. We act upon this; it's not a mystical theory, it's a practical principle.

As to women. Roman and Greek civilisation was in its way as great as our own—yet look at women there. Women have a place in Christian civilisation they never had anywhere else. In all the brilliant civilisation of the ancient world nothing like the Christian home was known, nothing like Christian public charities and philanthropy. I think this is quite undeniable. Look at women amongst Mohammedans, look at Mohammedan civilisation—what is it? There's no nation in Europe which is considered in politics which is not Christian. Christianity takes the lead in all civilisation.

I must end in haste.

40

To the Same

November 28, 1891.

Your letter came when I had no time to breathe. I need not say it made me sad—a deliberate decision to give up a struggle is always inexpressibly sad. Truth is worth contending for, and what has always and everywhere helped those who believed it to be better men and women must be worth a long struggle before one gives up and says, 'They are all deceived, there's nothing in it.' To my mind Christianity is so beautiful a dream, if only a dream, that one would prefer to sleep through life and dream on, than be awakened and see nothing. For there is *nothing* to take its place; it's an utter self-deception to talk of Theism—the Theism you speak of and Voysey speaks of is a Theism with the light of Christianity shining on it. We know what the barren pre-Christian Theism was: its records are written in the history of idolatry and polytheism. No, you must put away the idea that Theism apart from Christianity can be the very least consolation. I do not know that God is good—I am sure He is not love. I am not certain, in fact quite uncertain, that He is Almighty—He seems to be most unjust. Conscience gets no rest, sin no pardon, and of what lies beyond we have absolutely no knowledge—no positive assurance that there is anything beyond the grave. Well, I find all Christianity bids me believe easier than this, and it certainly does not tax either reason or conscience to the same extent.

I am writing in great haste as I am very busy to-day. You know how I wish and am always glad if I can help you.

41

To the Same

December 1, 1891.

Your letter has made me very glad. I am sure the battle is worth all it costs. If one only dies facing one's enemies one dies well; but when one gives up, there's nothing to hope for, and truth is worth fighting for though one may never gain its perfect knowledge. The merchantman seeking goodly pearls got trained to know the priceless pearl when he saw it; if he had not been always in search for the best he could get, he would not have known the value of that priceless pearl when he saw it. Keep yourself *up*; don't say things that only give substance to your doubts. Many things on many subjects that one feels or half feels it would be very wrong to put into words—words formulate thought as well as express it. Don't think, please, that the world is as bad and as unbelieving as you suppose. We see everything in the colour of our own minds. I can assure you it isn't true. I should say that it was the minority, not the majority, who didn't believe; their faith may not make them all they ought to be, but it's one thing to believe, another to be consistent—who, I wonder, is consistent? I think, I'm sorry to say, it's natural that clergy should sink down into routine, every profession has that tendency, and a priest is a man—most of us very poor men!—and always speaking and teaching has the tendency to drag into routine.

42

To the Same

March 28, 1894.

I am very glad things are clearer and better with you. If one is really and inwardly *true*, with all one's failures and defects one may believe and hope that our Lord will lead one on. We have often to pass through very dark times, and the waters will come in even to our souls; but if we can hold on then and wait, not plunging impatiently beyond our depth and breaking loose from the Hand that holds us, though we don't feel it, all will come well in the end—'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' The forsaking must be on our side, not on His.

43

To the Same

October 26, 1894.

I am afraid that I cannot say much to help you in the question that is puzzling you.

I should feel, I think, afraid, having only just got over your former difficulties, that this question, coming now, might be another form which those perplexities take. You used to doubt about Christianity, now you feel God has given you grace to believe and accept that, but at once this new question arises. May it not be the same temper of mind; your natural disposition showing itself in this way and leading you to feel unsettled and without repose, which one needs that one may grow? Perhaps if you did become a Roman Catholic you would find the same kind

of questioning in a different form. I don't say that this is so, but I think it would be necessary to make as sure as possible that it is not so. It's strange how capable the mind is of adapting itself to new conditions and finding there its own old temper and disposition. I cannot tell you that these questions are temptations ; I do not know, but I feel as if, as I say, it is natural that after coming out of a long period of doubt and unbelief you should find that you do not get peace at once but that the doubts return in another form. It is not enough to feel drawn to Rome, and to feel a dislike to much amongst ourselves. Nothing would justify one's leaving the English Church but a belief that it was no true part of the Church of Christ. If one feels clear about that, there is nothing but to go. If one doesn't think that, I can't see how—however one loves and longs for much that Rome gives—one can go. Of course it is absurd to say it would suit one's temperament, unless by that it is meant that a person of a certain temperament naturally will be led by God to believe Rome alone is right. I think that that seems to be true. This is clear to me, that those who have gone to Rome and been blessed had not a doubt. It was quite clear to them that Rome was alone the true Church. Others, *many*, have loved Rome and wished to go, but have been held back by the feeling that they did not believe Rome alone was true, however beautiful. I wish I could help you more, but I feel that I cannot say much on that question to help anyone. I can only say I have thought more about it than most, and so far I have not felt I could go, but that is little use to others. Don't let your mind get entangled, try to see what God leads you to and act up to the light He gives you. After a time one only gets hopelessly muddled.

44

To the Same

March 26, 1897.

Thank you for your letter. I do not feel at present that I have any right, or indeed any inclination, to try to influence others one way or the other. My own experience has taught me more and more clearly that no outside influence can really hasten or accomplish God's work—if it is His work, as I believe. If you try to know His will and to prove and test yourself, He will not leave you always in the dark. At the same time one must make use of the guides which He has given us—reason and conscience and feeling. I had felt for a long time mentally clear that Rome only could be the end; but then a few weeks ago it came upon me with a clearness and vividness that took possession of me, that I must act *now* or I should go on for ever in doubt and misery. That light never really left me till it had brought me safely to my Bethlehem. I could distinguish as I never could so clearly before the different currents that were acting upon and influencing me—the impossibility of leaving in the midst of work, the wrench, the beginning a new life, and a hundred things. But through all these drifting clouds the star of a clear conviction of what was right shone out and never failed me. Till that conviction comes who can dare to act? I would not give you the very slightest push. I know you are in earnest and you will act in God's time. This I feel sure of. When once one gets that view of the English Church that makes its inconsistencies a vivid reality that can't be explained away, one never can find peace there again. One may patch

up one's difficulties for a time, but the patch soon wears off and one's misery returns. I do think that no secondary consideration such as the effect upon others ought to influence you—leave that in God's hands. If you feel convinced that you ought to take the step, go out upon the waters at the risk of drowning and losing all. God will take care of the rest. The act must be done in the dark, but scarcely has one done it than 'there springs up a light for the righteous and joyful gladness for such as are true-hearted.' If you could see all and arrange all before, you would lose much of the blessing of a blind act of faith. I say all this on the condition that you are clear as to what is right; till you are clear, of course, you can do nothing but wait—if need be till death. . . . I have been staying with Cardinal Vaughan this week, and he has been taking me about to a number of places. Certainly what I have seen this week strengthens one's faith in the supernatural powers in the Church. God forbid that I should underestimate what is so good in the English Church, but this is different.

God bless you and guide you aright.

45

To the Same

May 29, 1897.

I am afraid I can't say much. One can't, it is quite true, anticipate God's time. I believe one must have an inner conviction that it is right for one to take the step before it is possible to take it, but that conviction may come by facing the question straight. And always remember God gives us our reason to guide us—the lesser light is still the light where

faith is not clear. If all one's reasoning leads in one direction, I think one should ask, 'Why, then, do I not follow where it leads?' There must, indeed, be a shrinking—a fear—perhaps almost a dread, lest after all one is mistaken, and in truth as one steps out of the boat the water under one's feet gives way. . . . Yet Our Lord will not readily forsake you if you have gone forth, because you have thought, through the storm of questionings and doubt, that you have heard His voice saying 'Come,' and when you feel as if all were over with you, you will find His arm about you and you will know you were right, 'Oh, thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt.'

For my part, I can only wonder that I could have waited so long—the English Church evaporated like a cloud city on my way to Beaumont and has never had any substance since. It is as different from what I am now in as possible, in ways difficult to explain. The atmosphere and tone is different here; it is broader, wider, with an extraordinary liberty. There is fearlessness in devotion and a certainty in faith, and an unending variety and fullness. And there is a wonderful charm in the place [Rome] that is given to what, for want of a better word, one may call sanctified sentiment—people are not afraid of it, for it is held in check by the clearness and definiteness of the faith. I do not believe I am the typical convert, as I cannot bring myself to be scurrilous towards what I have left, nor perhaps do I run into the extremes that some whom I have known do. But I am afraid Canon —— (to whom I have not written for many years) would be scandalised, and would give me up as irredeemable if I were to tell him—even in well-chosen words—what I really feel as to Rome and the English Church. But why should I hurt anyone's feelings even if they do say of me things that are not true. I don't feel as if

my present position needed sharp words to defend it—it is too strong and too great. I believe you will come, yet I should not say a word to hasten you, only this—face the whole question. Stand alone before God in the matter. I know what it is to have to act in a way that those [whom] one advises must think folly, yet God does allow one person to see what another can't, and each has to act as each is led. You will not find—on this side—any ghosts to frighten you when you come, or any secrets to which you are to be initiated. All is clear, open, and straight. I can see nothing which causes the suspicion about untruths in Rome. I can only attribute it directly to the devil ; certainly I find nothing of it. As to what you say about the Sacraments and the possibility of being mistaken, I think this : God deals with His Church as the one organised body which He created. He sanctions its acts, He guides its words. He has created the Sacraments as unfailing channels of grace. But God deals with individuals everywhere, and pours out blessings on all who love and try to serve Him. Therefore there is an abundance of grace poured out on individuals all over the world. If the Church of England is a true part of Christ's Body, then our Lord deals with her and takes [the same] interest in her as in the Roman Church. If she is not, if she has forfeited her place and rights, then God deals with every individual in her with His fullest love, and if her Sacraments have failed God makes it up to those who believe in her. Surely this doesn't make her think little of whether they *are* real or not, but the reverse. What one has to do, and what is so hard to do, is to look at the two bodies, the English and Roman Churches, apart from oneself, and ask which is most like a Divine work. One certainly does not love or contend for the truth, as it allows opposite doctrines to be taught—the other

certainly does. What *you* believe of the Blessed Sacrament, Confession, etc., you did not get through or from the English Church, nor would you be satisfied with her doctrines if you had to keep to them. *I* remember when Apostolic succession was a burning question; it was not half a century ago when few of the bishops believed it. They don't all believe it still. Is it a wonder that they can't get others to believe it? No one doubts that Rome has it, nor has she ever allowed anyone to question it and remain in her fold. To me for a long time the English Church as an organisation looked more and more human, less and less divine, and Rome more and more divine. Yet all we get, we can only use as a test of truth by seeing if we get it through the organisation. I used to feel that most of what I taught and believed I did not owe to, and I could not thank, the English Church for. I looked to where I got it, and came here to receive all the rest. God bless you.

46

To the Same

September 5, 1897.

As to purgatory, all such things as you quote are not of faith—all that is actually of faith is, 'There is a Purgatory in which the souls are aided by the Prayers of the Church on earth.' That, or words similar, is all that has been defined about it in the Council of Trent. Any speculation or ideas in regard to the suffering of souls in purgatory, however, does not interfere with the belief that whatever their sufferings their happiness in the midst of it all is greater than any happiness known on earth. They are in

intimate union with our Lord and with the Will of God. They would not desire anything but God's Will. They know they are safe, that they cannot sin nor fail soon to see God face to face. We may feel, I think, about the dead, that we can commit them in perfect faith and trust to the Hands of Him Who has proved His love by dying for them. We know that His own desire is the hastening of their admission to His Presence, and that we, by our prayers, can aid in this. What more do we need to know. If they do suffer we are sure His love will bless and comfort them in it.[1]

47

To the Same

October 22, 1898.

Your letter came just before I started for Italy, and I have been travelling ever since I left England, and only reached Rome a couple of days ago.

What more can I say on the subject of the Church than I have already said? Of course each soul stands alone before God, and has to act as God leads him or her. What is as clear as day to one is full of difficulties to another. Yet it can't be God's Will that one should be constantly examining and questioning the foundations—'Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation.' Certainly God has given you many blessings so far, but I think such evidences are scarcely safe as tests of the truth of a system. God will bless anyone who is in earnest and ready to suffer for Him,

[1] Cf. St. Catherine of Genoa, *Treatise on Purgatory*. Burns and Oates.

whatever their faith may be. To my mind, the fact that the Church of England breeds so widespread a doubt in her own claims, and is so hopelessly unable to reassure one who has once got upset, is very strong evidence against her. What so many of her most earnest children doubt is not likely to be true, and I have scarcely ever met a person who having once been thoroughly upset on the subject of Rome was ever able to settle down again in the English Church ; and what numbers who, after much anxiety, have taken the step and found themselves at peace ! No doubt many who come into the Roman Church do not seem any the better, but it is very difficult to use such things as evidence. A break in middle life is a terrible upsetting no doubt, and it needs a very close fidelity to grace to develop one's soul amidst new surroundings, and there is the danger of resting after a hard battle and a great trial, and a hundred other things. Besides, God doesn't give such evidence of His truth as leaves no possible room for a doubt ; if everyone who came to Rome advanced forthwith by strides to holiness, no one could doubt. But I don't think one can say that all Presbyterians or Unitarians who enter the English Church show any advance in holiness, though the English Church has certainly far more truth than either of these. One must keep to the point—is Rome or England true ? If Rome is true, one must risk everything temporal or spiritual and join her.

48

To the Same

August 16, 1899.

As to what you say about yourself. You know all I feel, and I do not suppose I need say more—

of course, in so grave a step one has to consider its effects on those around one, in the sense, but only in the sense, that it ought to make one as sure as one has the right to feel before taking such a step. That is to say it ought to hold one back from any hasty action, but surely no responsibility to anyone else can make fidelity to conscience, or what one believes to be the truth, less binding. There are moments in life when our Lord's words have a very terrible and literal meaning: 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me,' and the other side of these words in that other saying: 'There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethen, or wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.'

These words are an encouragement. God will make up to us for any sacrifice made for His sake, even in this world. But you know all this as well as I do. You did make one very real sacrifice and God blessed it. But I doubt if you really feel convinced that you ought to take the step. If you felt convinced I am sure you would take it. It seems to me, now, strange that one can believe a Church which gives no rest to heart or reason can be the true Church. In Rome, no doubt, there is the human side and the narrowness of individuals is often trying—yet one feels the vast difference between the irritating ways of individuals and the actions and utterances of the body. Bring the English Church face to face with its constituted authorities—the Bishops—and no one can doubt what it is. You may get out of it by saying the Bishops are not true to the Prayer Book, but after all that means to your interpretation of the Prayer Book. A book needs an interpreter, and throwing oneself back upon the 'undivided Church' as the

interpreter of the Prayer Book is only a subtle form of private judgment. How do you know [that] what you believe is what the Church believed before the Eastern break? Take, for instance, devotion to the Blessed Virgin. How do you know it stopped just where you stop? Only because you are told so, or because your education and feeling tells you to go no further. So in regard to the Papacy. I once thought as you do, now I feel confident I was wrong. Before, I drew the line under the natural guidance of my education and prejudice and the teaching of those I trusted, but in other points I went beyond my instructors —in fact I believed what appealed to me as true— and what so appealed I found in the 'Early Church.' There must be a guide to whom one bows and submits as divine, and that guide must not be a sublimated form of one's own bias.

49

To the Same

October 27, 1899.

I think what you feel is quite natural, but the question of the truth or untruth of Rome, you must remember, stands upon its own feet, whether St. Bartholomew's stands or falls. If it were undergoing all the trials of a bitter persecution, or if it were in a condition of the most triumphant success Rome is equally true or untrue, and once you are *convinced* she is true, nothing would justify your remaining longer in the English Church—not even to see St. Bartholomew's safe through a crisis, or to avoid being considered as deserting it in the hour of need, nor on the other hand in the hour of victory, and when all the associations with it are dearest. And on the other hand,

remember the Bishops' protestantising of the English Church doesn't make Rome right. If all the Bishops were to forbid everything you care for and to deny the Real Presence and to force the clergy into submission—all this wouldn't make Rome right, nor justify you in being received, except on the ground that she, and she alone, is the Church of Christ. You must keep the issues clear ; in a time of trouble one is apt to get mixed. To lose all faith in the English Church is quite a different act from believing in the Roman Catholic Church ; it is a positive, not a negative act. I am sure if you did believe that Rome was the one true Church you would come to her. Keep it, therefore, clearly before your mind that the English Bishops' depriving the English Church of everything you hold dear does not make Rome any more the true Church than she was before. Nor would St. Bartholomew's passing through ever so sore a trial justify your delay to see her safe out of it, if once you did believe Rome's claim to be true. That claim is simple :— the necessity of being in union with the See of Peter, the impossibility of a breach in the outward unity, and the claim that it is as necessary to have a voice that speaks with authority as to have hands to minister Sacraments. Again the lives of Roman Catholics may also be below their standard ; they may be narrow, worldly, uninteresting, and uninterested in works of charity : that does not affect the claims of the Church. The movement of the English Church is sixty years old ; the Catholic Church is not under the stimulus of such a movement, she has gone on through the ages. . . . It's natural that an especial earnestness should show itself amongst those just awaking to Sacraments, etc., but all these things are no tests. One thing I know that the Roman Catholic Church produces what Anglicanism can't produce in the great penitential orders—a type

of sanctity out of her reach—and, besides, a Priesthood throughout the world who voluntarily give up the happiness of domestic life. Compare not individuals but the broad products of Rome and the English Church in the religious life. Missions abroad, the demands of obedience freely given—the surrender of many plans and ideas—the great ascetic orders—the vast number of convents of men and women, and I think the result speaks for itself.

50

To the Same

February 1, 1900.

Thank you for the magazines. It seems to me that the things said about the Church are like a miasmic mist that ever hangs about her clear and beautiful light—invented by the devil to keep men back. Much the same happened with our Lord Himself and He practically foretold it : ' If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household.'

It seems amazing that such things should be believed, but they always bring to me—if I needed it—an additional proof that Rome is the Church of the ages. The same kind of things were said from the first days of Christianity on. They are said about no other body. The unmistakable supernatural power of the Church, like that of our Lord, is attributed to any other rather than the true source, ' He casteth out devils by Beelzebub.' Yet almost everything the Church does the English Church tries to do, but with her it is all right. The constant breath of scandal that hovers around the Church, misrepresenting her ways and doings was one of the great prophecies—the very first—the serpent

bruising her heel. Standing within, it seems to me amazing that people should be found to believe such things. Yet it is just what one should expect if the Church is our Lord's Presence on earth.

51

To the Same

February 19, 1900.

I really think you take Mivart's affair to heart far more than it is worth. . . .

I have scarcely seen or heard one paper or one person support him—even the *Record* considered that he was quite rightly treated, and most of the secular papers expressed themselves strongly against what he said—even the *Times*, being unable to support him, has kept a significant silence. What would you have ?

If you are shocked at a man saying such outrageous things and calling himself a Catholic, so am I, and I think the sooner he ceases to call himself a Catholic the better. If it is a token of disunion in the Church then I am afraid *that* kind of disunion began soon after the Church's birth and will continue to the end. But no one can deny that it shows that Rome does all she can to protect the Faith, and does it as the Catholic Church always does—by rejecting from her body those who refuse to accept her Creed. I should have thought that the whole incident told very well for Rome, and showed in strong relief the contrast of her methods to those of the English Church where Mivart might have continued a member and said all he liked. The assertion he makes about numbers of good Catholics who go to Communion and deny the Incarnation I confess I simply don't believe. But anyone who does so, does it certainly secretly ; and who can prevent

anyone going to Communion in a public church? If anyone chooses to commit sacrilege it is only too easily possible. Mivart's letter and article clearly show a mind in rebellion against Faith, and I confess a tone that didn't seem to me straight or true. I think the event has shown how little sympathy he awakened, and I protest against his being quoted as an instance of the antagonism between science and Rome. It's the antagonism between bitterness, ill-temper and pride, and Faith. He has taught *science* all these years unlet and unhindered. He wanted to teach his amazing theology and it was time to stop him. I really can see nothing but the evidence that Rome is watchful for the Faith. Suppose it was, instead of Mivart, the Archbishop of the most powerful see next to Rome—Constantinople—with a large following behind him, and suppose it was some obscure question of theology—that was the case when he and all his followers were excommunicated.

52

To the Same

May 7, 1900.

Thanks for the magazines. I did not read Mivart's article, I am a little tired of him. I don't like his methods, and I profoundly disbelieve his statements. If one turns away from speculations and ill-tempered gossip and looks at facts they are more restful. The church I was at in Scotland has about 4000 at Mass every Sunday, and the Easter Communions were about the same. Another church there about 7000 Easter Communions. A church I was at in Liverpool out of a population of about 5000 had about 2600 Communions at Easter, and all this is taken in the most matter of

fact way ; I could scarcely get the numbers out of the priests. Well, if people worship God and go to Communion and Confession in this way I am quite willing to leave the Mivarts and others to have their grumble. ' To the poor the Gospel is preached,' and these numbers are largely the poor. Let the wise of this world have their say at the congregations in Rome ; I should be glad to see some changes in those congregations, but meantime the Church works and saves souls. One priest told me of a poor girl who spends four or five hours before the Blessed Sacrament every day she gets a holiday, and a sister here told me of a business man who spends, I think she said, five hours in their chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed—every day. These are facts, the others are speculations.

53

To the Same

May 30, 1900.

As to your former letter. Why do you listen to all the stories gathered from anywhere about Rome. Of course, if Rome is *essentially* what your friend in Spain describes her, she can present no attraction to you or anyone else, but is to be abhorred. If the Church at that particular place is in a bad way I am very sorry for it, and no doubt the misdoing of Catholics anywhere from St. Paul's time down to to-day does harm. 'Through you,' he said, ' Christ is blasphemed among the Gentiles.' So that all the argument deducible from your friend's experience is that the Church in that part of Spain does as much harm as the Church to which St. Paul wrote in the days of the Apostles. If she or anyone else draws sweeping conclusions from Bilboa and says, the Catholic Church is like that all

over the Continent, I can only answer that after a good deal of experience from inside it, in Italy, such a conclusion is absolutely untrue. But what have abuses and bad priests and ignorant prejudice got to do with the question whether Rome is the true Church? In our Lord's time the one true Church was represented by the stark and barren Pharisaism of Judæa, yet He said to a Samaritan, who represented in many things the position of the English Church, 'Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.' One must keep one's mind to the one question—Is Rome or is England the representative of the Church of the Apostles? All the abuses in the world and all the bad priests and lax morals in the world do not affect that question. My advice to a person who said she was held back by such rumours and scandals was this—Go and live where the Church is at the lowest and scandals are real; if you cannot keep your faith in Rome in face of all such things you do not really believe in her. Scandals and wrong-doing are indeed terrible evils, and 'the corruption of the best is the worst'; but that corruption was in the Apostolic College itself where one out of the twelve was a thief, and I think it is well we should remember that such a scandal happened under the eyes of our Lord. The holiest and strictest discipline can't keep out corruption. The Apostles were rebuked when they desired to pluck out the tares: 'Let both grow together until the harvest.'

54

To the Same

February 14, 1901.

I think myself you are still a long way from Rome. Some time ago a lady wanted to be received while

at the same time she kept constantly criticising the devotions she did not like to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I refused to receive her till all that was passed.

To come to Rome in your present frame of mind would be impossible. Every line you write shows you distrust her, dislike her, and disbelieve in her. Be quite clear that you never could be received with the smallest hope of any peace till all that dwelling upon small defects, or pressing the lives of Catholics into the position of an argument, have passed away. I personally think such a sermon as you speak of pure trifling. I know some Catholics whose religion seems made up of such trivialities. I have heard people speak in a way as if they had found some short cut to Heaven without the trouble of moral effort. But what of that? Such people may be found everywhere. In Rome, these people lay hold of the least important things and exaggerate them into chief places in their life. In other religions probably the same class of people would give up religion altogether, or take up with the trivialities in them.

As to the Church of England compared with Rome, in its products I can only say, if you will insist on this as the chief test, you must compare justly. Compare the highest in each or the lowest in each, but not an ordinary or commonplace Catholic with the best the English Church has. Take the English Church as a whole and Rome as a whole. The best product of the English Church that I know is such men as Cowley and such women as, say, Lloyd Square. The best product of Rome is the *multitude* of such orders as Carmelite Nuns, Poor Clares, etc., and of men Carthusians, Trappists, etc. Cowley numbers not fifty I should think. The Jesuits in England alone some years ago numbered some six hundred. I remember soon after I was received going with the Cardinal to a

Carmelite Convent and saying to myself: 'The English Church could not produce this.'

Then again, Rome deals with a class that no other religion has anything to do with. She does keep hold of multitudes who do little else in the way of religion than go to Mass on Sunday. These are a class that in other religions would probably never or seldom go to church at all, yet numbers of them die good deaths. Of course, if you compare devout Anglicans with these, they are far superior—but so are devout Methodists or Presbyterians. You speak of the English Church as trying so hard to do right, etc. To my mind she has a fundamental disregard for truth. Her formularies are drawn up with a view to holding those who believe directly opposite doctrines. She has and always does sacrifice truth to keep numbers, and on any controverted question she leaves her children to shift for themselves, and then Anglicans talk of the untruth of Rome!

What I should advise you is to put aside all these questions of comparison; who has knowledge enough to carry out such comparisons, and to keep to the one question—which is true? If our Lord instituted the Papacy, no abuse, or sin, or worldliness can justify its being given up. If *He* instituted it as the centre of unity, then all separated from it are no longer in the Church.

I think myself it's a mistake to read first one side then the other. Of course Anglicans have answers, they are not all fools. The question is not whether an answer can be given to separate questions, but, are the answers adequate—do I need to hear the answer? And besides, do not the multitude of arguments all lead in one way—Romeward.

55

To the Same

February 17, 1901.

I only got your letter this afternoon as I was not here last night. I am sorry if what I said upset you, yet I am not sorry I said it. I don't think you *could* be received while your mind remains in the state it always has been whenever you have discussed or written on the question to me. How can you commit your soul to the care of a Church whose first and chiefest claim is to be divine, to teach with divine authority, who claims for herself, and for herself alone, all those startling words of our Lord—'If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a Publican.' 'He that receiveth you receiveth Me,' etc. etc.—and yet constantly find fault with small details of her methods and constantly compare to her disparagement those of other communions. Certainly, as Newman says, the Church that has been on earth two thousand years has collected some of the dust of earth upon the skirts of her garment, yet that garment is 'of wrought gold.' Certainly you will find many of her children formalists and trivial, and in many places you will find that the clergy are not as zealous and enthusiastic as the best of the High Church clergy, who belong to a movement still in its fervour. Unless you come, therefore, with your faith in her so strong that it stands independent of the people you may be thrown with, and even independent of any formalism or lack of zeal amongst the clergy, you would never find the peace you seek. Surely such things as slackness of individuals, or, what is sometimes more trying, the laying stress upon the least important things ought not to be things to dwell upon or to upset—especially for you coming

as you do from a Church where the holiest doctrines are denied, and all one's feelings of reverence constantly outraged. You keep yourself from realising all this by practically confining yourself to one parish, and closing your eyes to what is all around you. There are but few churches where you *could* go to Confession, many where your sense of reverence would be shocked if you went to Communion. What are individual carelessnesses, etc., compared to those which eat the very heart out of the English Church. Can you not rise to the fact that you will not get on this side of the grave any religion which has not *something* in it, or in its members, which may jar? You will certainly find none where you have greater width and liberty for your own soul (and consequently for the souls of others) than in Rome. I constantly feel that one has all the heart can long for or the imagination dream of. Yet the very liberty tolerates what suits some temperaments and jars on others. Many Italian devotions I should not like, but I am never asked to like, to use, or even personally to endorse them, but why should I not allow to an Italian the liberty he allows me?

Some four or five years ago a lady whom I had known well became a Catholic—a year or two before I did. She had lost all faith in the English Church, and she thought, I suppose, that she had full faith in Rome, but, even while being received, she said she did not approve, and could not understand, either the Communion in one kind, or the devotions to our Lady. She was received, having to risk and suffer much for what she did. Yet she always kept worrying on these two points, looking out, with an almost unconscious instinct for all exaggerations in devotions to our Lady, and the inevitable result was that in less than two years she returned to the English Church. I tell you

all this for I am so afraid of your taking the step before you get your mind into the proper attitude towards Rome.

'Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.' Those who do so enter find in it truly a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

As to the Papacy. The Anglican answer is, as they would say, based on historical grounds. They say we do not find the Roman claim brought forward in its fullness till the fourth century, and after that there are again and again difficulties which Rome must explain. The Anglican studies history with his mind already full of the idea that the power of Rome *grew*, partly from its political position and partly by ecclesiastical concession and partly by Papal aggression. Starting with this principle Anglicans say they find it [the papal claim] unsubstantiated by history. The Catholic begins the study of history with his mind full of the idea that the authority of the Papacy is divine—that any ecclesiastical legislation only declared how the divinely given authority was to be exercised (just as it declared the limits of Episcopal jurisdiction), and that Papal aggression so-called was the exercise of a claim based always upon an authority not ecclesiastically conceded, but divinely given.

So you see. Here are two systems [the believer in] each beginning with the mind prejudiced (if you like to use the word) on one side or another. They turn to history, and each claims to find in history what he goes to history, expecting to find. In answer, therefore, I think one might ask, can our Lord have left so grave and serious a question to be based solely upon the study of history? No historian ever yet wrote without colouring history with his own mind. Döllinger—a great historian—after he broke with the Church, said

he would have to write his whole history over again! That seemed to me to show how little worth the historical argument standing alone can have.

'To the poor the Gospel is preached.' I confess I have neither time nor talents nor sufficient power of historical criticism to be able to prove my faith from history. How can I tell that my mind is not warped in one direction or the other to begin with? Therefore, there must be some other way of getting at the truth, and I think that other way is to take the Church as you and I find it to-day. Here is Rome with the Papacy, so to speak, in possession. She claims that the Papacy is divine. She quotes the words of our Lord which could not be stronger or clearer if He did mean what Rome says He meant. She points to ages of the past in which the holiest of her children submitted and suffered in submitting to the Pope's authority as divine. She bids you look round, wherever the Papacy is not there is just that lack which the Papacy supplies—discipline, unity, freedom from secular interference. She says: 'All this works so well and the lack of it causes so much injury to the Church, that one might suppose beforehand that our Lord would not have left us to supply what He could leave supplied, and nothing but the belief that the authority of the Pope is divine would *work*. Men of all countries and ages would not yield except to a divine authority, and this authority is so declared by our Lord in words that are hard to explain otherwise.' As I think I said to you the other day—either they mean what they imply, or they mean nothing. Our Lord who saw beforehand the history of the Church used them, knowing they would be misunderstood (if Rome is wrong), and selecting words that certainly were calculated to mislead, and, moreover, those who take them literally find that they do produce the effect

they imply—a rock of strength, coherence, and unity.

I do not by any means imply that we are *not* to study history, and that history does not bear witness to the Church ; but I do mean to say that such study is not the ordinary way to get at the truth, and also that the Church must be the interpreter of her own history. You would, for instance, trust an English history written by an Englishman more than one written by a Frenchman, because the Englishman breathes English tradition and is in a living system, and in the present has the key to the meaning of the past. You would not trust a history of the English Church written by a Unitarian as much as you would one written by an Anglican, because the Unitarian begins with what you believe to be a wrong bias. So the living, teaching Church of to-day, through the traditions and institutions of to-day, interprets the past. To me now, after a short four years in the Church, the arguments from antiquity of Anglicans seem extraordinarily trivial. The Church, on the Roman principle, is to-day as much the Church and as good a teacher as she was in the time of St. Cyprian. Her power of teaching depends, not on her memory of the past, but on the indwelling Spirit, Who is to guide her *always* into all truth.

It would be better if you could come and have a talk—writing is unsatisfactory. Remember to be able to find peace as a Catholic you must not *only* have lost faith in the English Church, but—a very different thing—you must have a firm faith in Rome ; and she certainly does inspire faith in her children when they are true to her.

56

To the Same

November 11, 1897.

As to what you say that no one can enter the Church without denying that he has ever received a Sacrament, it is not true *actually*. You are asked to deny nothing nor profess anything except the creed of Pope Pius, which you will find in the Golden Manual. Of course in coming one accepts the Pope's decision, which practically means this: there is not sufficient [certainty of the] validity of English Orders to allow them to be received. An axiom of the Roman Church is: 'In regard to Sacraments, there must be nothing that has a doubt.' What you say about the possibility of a universal scepticism if one doubted English Orders, that perhaps Roman were not valid either, this seemed to me to be just the opposite of true. Remember the facts. In the year 1833 there were two bishops on the English Bench who believed in Apostolic succession—in those days everyone would have agreed with the Pope's decision—the English Church has changed her mind on the subject. The bishops at that time, and on, till comparatively a few years ago, did their best to stamp out faith in the priesthood; now they have turned round and say they were wrong. With such changes of teaching there's plenty to make everyone uncertain, and God is not to blame. The English Church *as a whole* has never taught the doctrine of the priesthood, she does not now—she allows numbers to believe the opposite. Therefore it need engender no universal scepticism to feel uncertain about her Sacraments. On the other hand, Rome has confessedly never hesitated as to priesthood and Sacraments, nor will she allow a doubt on the matter. The Sacraments

in the English and Roman Churches therefore stand on very different grounds. England has allowed, still allows, their denial. A few years ago she wouldn't allow her people to believe in them—few did, many still don't—a comparatively small body believe in the Sacrifice. What wonder, therefore, that anyone should doubt ? What right has anyone to say God is dealing hardly if the English Church hasn't a priesthood ? On the other hand, Rome has never swerved nor hesitated : it would be a wonder if God allowed her to be deceived on that subject, at any rate. When people speak of the awfulness of a doubt about the English priesthood they close their eyes to very recent history and to many present facts. Would you like to receive Communion from Mr. A——'s hands ? Yet though he would get furious at being told it, he is as much a priest as Mr. B——, and Mr. B—— is no more a priest than he. The English Church gives place to both, and allows both to teach. Truly, it is not to be wondered if men doubt her Sacraments, or that God would entrust so precious a thing to so careless a guardian.

57

To the Same

[Undated.]

As to what you say about the Sacraments. I am afraid I was not clear. What I meant to say was this. The Pope's Bull practically means : ' English Orders are too uncertain for the Church to admit them.' I think the most moderate, and those on the Commission who hoped most, felt that all that was possible was that conditional re-ordination should be allowed. I think all felt they were too uncertain for anything else. I can't myself see any difficulty—if one believes

Rome to be the Catholic Church and the See of Peter to be the divinely instituted Head—in accepting this decision. One is not called upon to make any declaration as to disbelieving in one's past experiences—indeed, I should say personally one may believe what one has believed though one submits entirely to Rome's decision, i.e. that she can't accept the Orders on account of their uncertainty. . . .

As to the possibility of one's losing faith altogether if one lost faith in English Orders, what I meant to say was this. You and many others firmly believe in English Orders (I had no doubt of them, though now I feel how uncertain they may be), but your faith in them is not based upon Anglican teaching, i.e. upon your Church's teaching; *it* has changed its opinion, it has not taught persistently the priesthood, Rome has never hesitated. Therefore, if you lost faith in English Orders it would not at all follow that you would feel a universal scepticism. Certainly many in the English Church, and multitudes outside, doubt Anglican Orders and Sacraments. No one inside or outside doubts Roman. Experience is a great thing indeed, and God forbid one should give up the faith based on personal experience; but experience backed by the universal belief of Christendom is more reasonable and beyond the appearance of a doubt. I have no desire to shake your faith in English Orders. I did not doubt them myself when I left the English Church. I was asked no question on the subject when I was received, but surely one can feel that faith based on one's own experience, while many of one's co-religionists tell one one is mistaken (and a few years ago all the bishops would have done so), and while the greatest part of Christendom tells one one is mistaken, is a very different and less reasonable faith than a faith based first upon authority and universal experience,

and then supported by and strengthened by one's own personal experience. Such is the faith in Roman Sacraments. If in the English Church you were beset with doubts—say as to the Real Presence—you would consult different people, and you would be told by some that there was no such thing as the Real Presence; by others, that your doubts were temptations. You would feel how much was personal and subjective, how little authoritative. If you were a Roman Catholic and had the same doubts you would be told everywhere and by everyone the same truth, altogether independent of personal experience. Surely you can see on what a different foundation the faith in the two Churches rests. One has to keep distinct in one's mind the faith one gets in and through the Church one belongs to and that which one gets from other sources. The new Presbyterian High Church people believe several Catholic doctrines. If they grow, twenty years hence they may say, 'Has God been allowing us to believe all these things when we really hadn't them?' The answer is, 'Your Church never taught you to believe them.'

The next series of letters was written to an Agnostic who became a Catholic, and eventually a Carmelite.

58

November 13, 1907.

I meant what I said 'If I were to tell you what I thought was keeping you back you would not believe me,' in the abstract, not as applying in the present case to you in particular, but that as a rule people have to find out for themselves. I would gladly tell you, in your own case, if I knew, but I really don't. It may be, and possibly is, something in the past—a

habit of mind, or indifference, or not living up to what you *did* believe, or at least not trying hard enough; but I don't feel as if I knew you well enough. I think I saw your state of mind better last time than ever before, and believe heartily that whatever may have been the cause of your loss of faith, whether consciously your own fault, or not through any conscious fault of your own, you have suffered a good deal, and are suffering. But I believe you are now absolutely, so far as I can see, on the right path, the road that ends in faith and light and peace, and that if you keep up the moral effort to live true to all you do believe, however little, you will get what you are in search of—the pearl of great price. But remember the seeker for that pearl has to keep his mind open, and to be ready to part with what he has already purchased when he sees a better. The search prepares the hand and eye to detect any flaw in what has been already purchased, and to recognise the perfect pearl when it *is* seen. The search is no waste of time, even if it be not crowned with success; for surely everyone who goes out on that quest will find the object of his search in the next world, if not in this. There is all the difference in the world between a person who is always in search for truth and one who is content without it. One thing I should like you to try as soon as you feel it possible, and that is to say any prayers you can, such as the 32nd, or 25th, 27th Psalms. In saying them you can unite yourself with the spiritual longings of earnest souls for the last 2000 years. Please never think you are lacking in deference. Two people can't really talk out a matter unless they speak frankly and on the same level. After all, your opinions are just as valuable to you as mine are to me. Be sure to let me know when you are in town.

God bless you.

59

To the Same

June 10, 1908.

I have so often thought of you and wondered how you were getting on. I can sympathise with you so much, as I have been through the same tangle myself. The nearer one gets to the City of God the more intricate and perplexing the many cross-roads and turnings become—till in a moment the road lies out clear and straight, and the City stands out before one's eyes with its wide open gates of welcome. Please God you will see it soon.

60

To the Same

June 20, 1908.

I have been out of town for two nights, and got both of your letters this afternoon. I wish *so* much I could help you. I never intended or thought that your coming here for a week or two should in any way commit you to anything. I meant that you should go more into the Roman point of view, and hear all I have to say in explaining the doctrines, etc. Nor should I, I think, be even disappointed if you went away and said you could come to no conclusion at present. One person came to me for more than a year, and though she was ready to be received I did not think she was ready and refused to receive her, and she went to India, and I don't think she is yet a Catholic, and that was four or five years ago. We cannot hurry ourselves, and I took too long myself to feel inclined to hurry anyone. Only I *beg* you not to commit yourself to

Anglicanism till you feel at least certain that you are right in doing so ; don't do it in despair of ever being able to become a Catholic. After all, you are *not* a member of the English Church, and to join it now after all these years is a very different thing from going on in it if you had never abandoned it. It must mean to you a kind of adult and deliberate confession of faith in it. What I am afraid of, if you were to join the English Church, is this, that you would feel for a time comfort and help from the very goodness of the people you would be thrown with, but that before long the anomaly and unreasonableness of the position would begin to disturb you, and you would have to go through all this worry again. Don't take any step till you feel both spiritually and intellectually clear that you are right. One must—to find a permanent resting-place—feel clear as to the intellectual grounds of one's faith in a system to which one commits oneself. Better to wait *any* time than to act before one knows that one's intellect is not resting on an insecure foundation which in the long run must upset one's faith. I feel for you so much, and understand all you are going through. I have been through so much the same thing myself ; but if you are patient a conviction certain, clear, and overpowering will come to you : 'This is the way, walk in it.' Till you get that conviction you can but wait, and offer your waiting in suffering to God, in atonement for any fault of your own through which you may in the past have lost your faith. Come up in July if you feel it would be any help. I will be only too glad to do anything in my power to help you, and you need not fear that I will either hurry you or expect any immediate result. You said you felt more strongly the claims of Rome than of the English Church ; if so, how can you join the English Church, or rejoin it with mature judgment and deliberate consent ? Don't be deceived

by the argument that in becoming a Catholic you leave the Church of your baptism. You were baptized in the Church of Christ, the Church He founded; you could not be baptized into anything else, and having drifted from the English Church you now desire to right yourself by outward act with that Church into which you were baptized whatever it may be—Anglicanism, the Roman, or Methodist. When I first saw you, you told me you were an Agnostic, not an Anglican; you don't slip back into Anglicanism because you believe now in God. Anglicanism is a system, and you must believe in that system before you reunite yourself with it, and I don't myself believe that if you realise this you can do it?

God bless you, my dear child, and lead you into all truth.

61

To the Same

January 25, 1909.

It was a great happiness to me to see and feel that you seemed already so much at home and at peace in the Church, especially with so little external help, but that even is not without its advantages, and perhaps a good thing to begin with; it throws one upon oneself and on God, and it is curious how, standing almost alone, one can feel the great atmosphere of the Church breathing around one, and filling one with its bracing air. The air, alas, is not always so bracing when one breathes it in company with a certain type of Catholic, who seems to have the power of expelling or exhausting or destroying its oxygen, and making it rather stifling and heavy! My great friend St. Paul after his conversion went off into solitude for about three years! The result of which is probably seen in the Epistles

to the Romans and the Ephesians! So we may have something good from you later on!

62

To the Same

August 1, 1909.

Very many happy returns of to-day, and may each year bring you some new blessing and deeper knowledge of God, and of His will for you. I feel somehow that He has some purpose for you and that this is just a time of preparation and rest, a breathing time to get ready. I think the way you have been at once thrown upon yourself, as soon as you became a Catholic, so far from a Church and so isolated from religious sympathy, is in many ways a very good thing, and tests and develops your convictions and your character. It's very hard I know, but I think later on you will not regret it. After all, so far as each one of us is concerned, the Church, with all its organisation and many helps and attractions, exists only to help us to know and love God and to get nearer to Him. Even though you see and feel so little of it around you, you are a citizen of that great City and bear about with you its freedom, its breadth, and its power, and perhaps a person who is very isolated religiously may feel all this more than others, as an Englishman might feel in some other land the greatness of being an Englishman. At any rate, I feel sure that God is preparing you for something. And when the door opens, and the call comes, 'they that were ready went in and the door was shut'—shut against the unprepared, and shut protecting those who entered in.

The next letter is undated. It was written to an

Anglican clergyman who had asked Father Maturin's advice, and deals chiefly with the question of corporate re-union.

63

As to your letter, I will answer you quite candidly what you have asked me, as I suppose you would wish me to do. And let me say, first, that I am not a controversial person, and have a great interest naturally in all that is going on in the Church of England, and can view it all with greater calmness, as not being disturbed by the inconsistencies which troubled me so much when I was in it. May I say first of all, that I cannot understand how any one who is *convinced* that the claims of the party to which you belong, and I did belong, cannot be upheld, can remain on with a view to a corporate movement. If ever there *is* a corporate movement to Rome, it will be due largely to the individuals who have already gone and led the way. But I cannot see exactly what a corporate movement means when it comes to a question of truth and untruth, right and wrong. I suppose people arrive at their convictions in different ways and with different degrees of certainty. But how could you or I go on receiving Communion and ministering in the English Church after we became convinced that any body of Christians not in union with the Holy See is in schism, in order to wait for others? To my mind, there are two states of mind that are apt to be confounded—one is a loss of faith in the possibility of the English Church ever being able to recover itself—a despair of the whole position—the other is an absolute conviction that, quite regardless of anything else, the claims of Rome are right—Rome *is* the Church. Now, no amount of mere Anglican anomalies could justify

a man in becoming a Roman Catholic. The only ground is that the Church and Rome are synonymous. And, when a man believes that, how he can possibly stay on in a body which he knows not to be the Church in order to influence others, I cannot understand. It seems to me like a man who has married a divorced woman and lives on with her agitating meantime for the repeal of the divorce laws. Spencer Jones' books are incomprehensible to my mind—a man spending his time and learning in proving the Divine authority of the See of Peter, but not submitting to it. It is like a Presbyterian writing to defend the Divine authority of the Episcopate while remaining a Presbyterian. That a number of people can arrive simultaneously at the same conviction is, I suppose, true; but that people, especially those who teach and minister in a body, should go on ministering with a view to getting others to leave with them is to me incomprehensible. It is unjustifiable in itself, and it is most unfair and disloyal, forgive me for saying it—treacherous to the body to which he belongs. What right has a man to hold a representative position in a body with a view to induce its members to leave it, wearing its livery, owing his position of influence to it, receiving its pay, with the hope of, so far as he is concerned, destroying it ?

As to what is thought of the possibility of such a movement here, my dear ——, I am very sorry to say that the ignorance and lack of interest which English Catholics display towards the English Church is difficult to imagine. They think *nothing* of it and care nothing about it ; it surprised me when I was received. If they come across an ordinary moderate High Churchman who talks of the Real Presence or Confession, they express and feel amazement that he remains where he is. No one who has not been

in the movement *can* understand it, it appears to them so hopelessly unreasonable. The idea that we used to have when I was at Cowley, that Rome was always watching with interest—if not jealousy—the Anglican movement, is hopelessly contrary to *my* experience at any rate. Very few Catholics in this country give them even the credit of being serious. Any hope from Rome which keeps you, or such as you, on in the English Church with the idea of some terms being reached for meeting a corporate movement in the English Church is, I am afraid, chimerical. And I confess that I for one should regret such a corporate movement. If a large body in England, at any rate, became Catholics they would bring, I am afraid, their own ethos with them, and the Church in England is too small a body to deal with them. For my part, I should rather come alone than as one of a body. Some years ago there was a good deal of talk and some expectation of the Scotch Presbyterians coming over to the Church of England in a body in the event of their being disestablished in Scotland. I always felt it would be bad for the Presbyterians and for the English Church. *They* would bring a good many of their own ideas with them, and the English Church would never assimilate and digest them. I feel to a certain extent the same about any large body of High Churchmen becoming Catholics. The tone and temper and methods of the Church are quite different. You ask my advice—it's rather difficult to give as I am ignorant of your state of mind, but I should sum it up in a few words.

(1) If you believe in the Divine Authority of the Papacy and that Our Lord built His Church upon the Episcopate with the See of Peter at its head then make your submission ; if, or as long as, you have doubts on this subject stay where you are.

(2) If you have any belief in the Anglican claims to be part of the Body of Christ stay where you are. The two theories—that the Church can be divided, and that National Churches are autonomous and can reform themselves; and the theory that the Church is a kingdom which is at unity with itself—are absolutely irreconcilable. There is nothing in all nature to uphold the theory that an organism can be inwardly at one and outwardly divided, the flow of the sap through the tree depends upon its outward and visible unity, so of the blood through the body, so of the different members of a Kingdom—destroy the outward unity and the inward ends with it. Grant all that is claimed by Anglicans as to the corruption of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as to the repeated appeals for a General Council which were unheard, as to the harshness of the treatment of England by Rome, or the political influences which directed the policy of the Pope. Grant all that There is but one way of a member of a body protecting itself from the disease which is contaminating the whole body:—heal the body—you can't heal or protect a member of the body by cutting it off. Its life is bound up with the life of the body. If a branch be cut off from a tree and planted and grows it may have a healthier development than the tree, but its life, its history, are no longer that of the parent tree. The history and development of the English and Roman Churches have been on different and independent lines since the separation—what the English Church boasts of: her comprehensiveness, etc., Rome hates. The two bodies have gone each their own way, and their ways are wholly different. Our Lord's prayer for Unity was 'that the *world* may know Thou hast sent Me'—the unconverted ignorant world, the man in the street—and I can't but think that that proverbial

person would be astonished if you told him that the English and Roman Church were one, and that their Unity ought to be to him a witness of the Incarnation. But this ignorant and unreligious person somehow does feel the force of the Unity of Rome.

Well, that's my advice. I thank God I did not become a Roman Catholic till I was wholly convinced of the claims of the Roman See—now, and ever since, I have as little doubt of it as of the existence of a Church at all. And truly from the time I made up my mind to be received the English Church melted before my eyes and ceased to exist as a Church. 'I went by, and lo she was gone; I sought her, and her place could nowhere be found.' And I have found in Rome all that the heart can desire. Nor can I imagine the Church founded 2000 years ago differing much from the Roman Church of to-day. For ten full years before I was received the question was practically never out of my mind—since a short time after my reception it passed away and never returned, nor can I imagine any combination of circumstances that could ever make it a question again. Don't let any anomalies in the English Church induce you to suppose that *therefore* you must become a Catholic. You become a Catholic because you believe the Roman Church the sole heir of the promises of Christ. Her claims stand not merely as an antithesis to Anglican claims—but upon their own independent grounds. I have known of one or two who have left the English Church in despair and become Catholics without a positive conviction, and naturally have not remained. I am not a controversialist or a proselytiser, but I feel for those who stand on the edge and do not take the plunge. They seem to me always mentally and spiritually shivering in the cold as I did. Now from my heart I can say, and make my own, the

words of the Psalm : ' I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.'

If you care to show what I have written to anyone you are quite at liberty to do so.

Especially in these letters to the clergy we realise Father Maturin's intense sympathy with those who were going through the acute suffering, for himself now happily ended. To another he writes :

64

November 1, 1900.

You know how I sympathise with you. It is an agony to feel entangled in the tortuous labyrinth of this question. I used to feel as if one went round and round, sometimes seeing as clearly as possible the exit, and then finding oneself as much entangled as ever. Often Rome seemed so clearly the only conclusion that I felt, ' if it is so clear everyone must see it, and as they don't I must be deceiving myself.' And then when the intellectual position seems solved the moral one rises up, and one wonders if men so much better than oneself reject Rome, how can God leave them in the dark and give me the light, etc. etc. You know it all, no doubt. Yet it is not our part to solve the mystery of God's leadings, but to obey as He seems to lead each one of us. I think one thing is good to remember, that when one thinks of the intense goodness and holiness of so many in the English Church whom you and I have known and lived with (such as the Cowley Fathers and numbers of others) who believe most of the Catholic Faith—what they live on is not given them by the English Church, they have got

most of it from Rome. If it would be possible to bind them down hard and fast to the Prayer Book and the teaching of the bishops, how many of them could stand it? The Church that they love and profess to obey is an ideal—non-existent, a dream, the Church of 1500 years ago—one that God guided for 500 years and then abandoned! When I analysed the Church of my dreams and of my allegiance as an Anglican, I found it living at my side in the form of Rome. In coming to Rome I felt that I simply transferred myself to where I belonged. I believe practically what I have always believed, with the addition of the divine authority of the Papacy. That kept me back for a long time. I felt once or twice as I stood on the threshold that I did not believe it and so I went back, and I am thankful I did not come while a shadow of a doubt remained on that subject. I have never had a doubt or a question upon it since I came. When one is brought up in the belief that the Papal position is purely ecclesiastical, one interprets facts and writings according to that theory, yet one feels how often one has to strain things to suit the theory. The same things become luminous when one has grasped the fact that our Lord instituted the Papacy as truly as He did the Episcopate, and that the Church legislated as to the way in which both offices should be exercised.

My advice to you is this. As long as you feel you can conscientiously minister where you are—while you are thinking the question out, go on. I celebrated up to the very end. One is not called upon to take so grave a step in a hurry. Even when it all seems clear I think one ought to take time to make sure that this is a lasting conviction—not a passing moment of insight. One's old faith should have a decent burial, as St. Augustine says of Judaism. Be as *sure* as you *can* be; so sure that whatever you may have to go

through afterwards you can't be shaken. The upheaval is terrible—the breaking of old ties and associations—the tearing up one's life by the roots. Many Catholics you will find narrow, ignorant of all you have been interested in in the past, and not much interested in you—a stranger coming from a land they despise. You will feel very lonely; no one knows the people and the things of your past; often your heart will feel so torn that you may think it is your intellect that wavers, that is uncertain, and as the heart turns back to its old moorings it may seem as if you acted hastily or without conviction, or with impatience. Therefore you need a sheet-anchor to hold you fast in such stormy times. I felt the hold of that sheet-anchor more than once in the certainty that whatever I might feel I knew that there was nowhere for me to turn. The English Church melted before my eyes before I left it, and never has taken substantial form since. I knew that I had to hold on to the Papacy as divine, and I knew that however trying *some* (by no means all) Catholics might be, I had no doubt that Rome was the Catholic Church. I hope you may see clearly what you ought to do, and may do it. . . . I ought to add that I have had really a wonderfully easy time of it; things have been made more easy than I could have imagined, but everyone must expect at first a time of inward suffering.

The following undated letter was written to yet another clergyman who had sought his help.

65

You have my very deep sympathy in the difficult position in which you find yourself placed. Of course,

there can be no question that a man is bound to follow his conscience at all costs, however much pain it may bring to those he loves and to himself. But one is certainly justified in testing one's self and making sure that one's convictions are real, and that one is not acting upon impulse. I do not know how long you have felt upset, or the exact nature of your difficulties. You only speak of the attraction of Rome. I believe myself that that attraction is one of the inevitable results of the truth of her claims: if she is the Body of Christ, His divine Presence upon earth, the result would be precisely what it is, that she should draw out the most devoted love and the bitterest hatred among men, just as Our Lord Himself did, and just as with Our Lord many good and earnest men could be ranked amongst His opposers. But at the same time, such an attraction is not in itself sufficient to justify an educated man in becoming a Catholic. Her appeal is to the head as well as to the heart. It's not enough even to have lost all faith in the Church of England, you must have a positive belief in the claims of Rome. She appeals no doubt, like her Head, to all those who are weary and heavy-laden that she may give them rest, and this rest she does most assuredly give; but the reason and the intellect must first find some measure of that rest, which comes from the firm belief in her claims and which leaves no lurking doubts as to their justice. I do not know how far you have considered all this, as you do not say. My own belief is, that to any one who knows what her claims are, not what they are supposed to be, and who clears his mind of all conscious or unconscious prejudice her claims are irresistible. After sixteen years of experience, I thank God with all my heart that I became a Catholic, and realise more and more that the Church is the only body that seems to me able to exist in the gathering storms

of modern thought, or to guide men safely through them. It is very difficult to write to a stranger, and would be much more satisfactory to talk. Could you come and see me?

The four following letters are all on the same subject of Anglican Orders. Father Maturin's view of this question was often discussed and quoted, generally with more or less of inaccuracy. These letters, all written to different clergymen of the Church of England, make the position of his own mind abundantly clear.

66

November 20, 1899.

. . . To me the question of Orders never presented a shadow of difficulty. I had personally no doubt about them, and celebrated in the English Church a few days before I went to Beaumont. I always felt, 'If Rome is the Catholic Church she is certainly competent to decide on such a question.' The English Church always awaits a General Council, so she says. If a General Council were to meet the question of her Orders would have to be gone into before her bishops were allowed a place. Would you—having the same subjective experience as you have had—be prepared to accept her judgment if it were against their validity? (*A priori* one would suppose that such a decision must be against, as every body, outside herself, who has gone into the question has given it against them: the [Jansenist] Archbishop of Utrecht on almost the same grounds as Rome.) If you would accept such a judgment, then the argument from subjective experiences (which is certainly one to give full weight to) which you now use, yields to the stronger objective one of authority, and

your reason for giving them so much weight is really that you do not accept the authority which has condemned English Orders. I suppose you would say, 'If a General Council were to meet I should sink all personal objections and be prepared to pledge myself in advance to accept its judgment.' If so, then the falling back upon the strength of conviction of the validity of English Orders is merely another way of saying, I do not believe that Rome is the Catholic Church—or, in other words, I do in my heart believe the whole Anglican claim, and in that case what can you do but stay where you are.

But, on the other hand, if you examine the grounds of your conviction of the validity of Anglican Orders as a ' real fact '—as you say—leaving aside for the moment subjective experiences which no one can argue with—on what do they rest ? Not on the authority of the English Church as a whole and continuously, for she has always allowed a larger or smaller portion of her ministry categorically to deny them, and, as Gore said the other day, sixty years ago only two bishops on the Bench believed in them. There has *never*, therefore, been either a unanimous or uninterrupted belief in them in the English hierarchy ; it is therefore on the authority of individual scholars and theologians, or as the outcome of your own private studies. I don't suppose that you rely with confidence on the latter as against Rome, so you are thrown back on the authority of individuals. Have you such implicit confidence in, I do not say their scholarship, but in their having the traditional theological ethos as would lead you to accept their judgment in so delicate a matter, as against the traditional methods of Rome ? ' De sacramentis nihil dubium.' There must be a certainty, a doubt in such a question is impossible. Do you then feel such an entire confidence in individual authority

in the English Church on this question as to outweigh the decision of Rome, and all the conception you had formed on other grounds of her claim to authority? In my case, as I say, I had no doubt about my Orders at all, and I had absolutely no doubt that Rome is the Catholic Church. A few months after I was received someone wrote to me and said that it was being said on all sides that I still believed in Anglican Orders and that I ought to contradict it. The Cardinal happened to be in Rome at the time; I read him the letter and said, 'I believe absolutely in the authority of the Church; I cannot show more completely that I accept the authority than by the fact that I am about to get ordained, but no one whom I left in the English Church would think me an honest man if I were to say publicly I did not believe in Anglican Orders. They would naturally ask what day and hour I had ceased to believe in them, as I had up to the last ministered in the English Church.' He quite saw and accepted what I said. The other day in France I met a French priest in the train, he asked me what I thought on the subject. I said, 'I accept entirely the Pope's decision.' 'Yes,' he said, 'but what do you personally think.' I said I thought there was more to be said for them than was supposed, and I see no disloyalty and nothing illogical in such a position. I know *I* am not competent to decide. I never had any confidence in Anglican divines. The authority that by natural temperament and conviction I am perfectly prepared to accept decided against them, and I accept the decision. In Rome I only heard of one man who looks upon the Bull as *ex cathedra*. I see no reason myself if Leo XIII reopened the question after it had been already decided by more than one Pope, why later on another Pope should not reopen it, if any further evidence came to light. But meantime it never

has or does cause me a shadow of difficulty to submit my own opinion on the matter to what I believe to be the highest authority on earth. Nor do I reason out all the consequences to those I have left and love in the English Church. I know there are many whose shoes I am not worthy to clean, and I know God's power to supply deficiencies, but I know also that that would constitute no sufficient ground of faith for me.

67

April 18, 1904.

I hasten to answer your letter received this morning. I shall answer your questions in order.

(1) First to correct an error. I can, in the most decided way, assure you that your informant is mistaken in saying he or she ever heard me say I believe in the validity of the Orders of the English Church. It would be impossible for me to be mistaken in this matter, and I would ask you to beg this person to contradict it to whomsoever he or she may have said it. The repetition of such things does much harm in holding people back, and I have been fettered with so many things I have neither said nor thought, that I think the person owes it to the cause of Truth to say, at any rate, that if it was thought I said it, the person is mistaken. As to my own personal conviction. When I made up my mind to be received the question of Orders never troubled me. I never had any doubt on the subject; but in making up my mind to be received I felt that, in a question of that kind, if, as I did, I believed Rome to be the Catholic Church, I could not hesitate to accept her judgment. It never occurred to me to be a question to consider, whether I should get ordained. I did so without scruple or

question. To my mind the question is a far larger one than a matter of that kind. Orders do not make a Church, and *the* Church always has claimed and exercised the right of deciding as to the validity of the Orders of any heretical or sectarian body.

As to past experience of Sacraments in the English Church, I answer as I always have done. I do not care to be logical or to define, and I leave it with God, being deeply grateful for all of good—and I cannot measure it—that I did get in the past. If the question were ever reopened in Rome, and if it were decided that more was to be said for Anglican Orders than was thought, no one would rejoice more than I; but I feel that it is all a very technical question for skilled theologians, and that subjective experiences must not be given undue weight.

(2) As to yourself. I can only say as I was received while I had practically no doubt on the subject of Orders, I of course should feel the same in advising another [to take the same step], *if* you have as strong a conviction of the authority of Rome, and a readiness to say, 'Whatever my own personal feelings in that matter I can't hesitate to submit to the judgment of the Church.' If, on the other hand, your wish to be received abroad is owing to any feelings of the *rights* of the English Church in England, I should advise you strongly to defer your reception—in your heart you do not believe in the authority of Rome if you have such a feeling as that. But I am possibly quite mistaken in supposing that your wish to be received abroad has any such meaning.

(3) I certainly think there can be no objection whatever if your wife has made up her mind to be received that she should wait to do it under the circumstances that seem most desirable. I never can agree with those who urge people to act at once, of

course if the delay is not long. I always remember in this connection St. Augustine's remarks about the Temple continuing for some years that the Law might have a decent burial!

May I venture a word of advice. I think you would find it easier and quieter to be received at home than abroad. They make much more of a business of it there, as they are not so used to it. A few of us are living here—four or five priests—and if you cared to come and stay here and to be received here, or while staying here, no one need know anything about it, and we should be delighted to have you. I merely suggest this—you could not be quieter, and we have a chapel in the house.

I should advise you to get your mind quite clear on the subject of Orders. I never could see how it could be a difficulty, if Rome is the Church, the whole Church, and the only Church founded by our Lord—surely she must decide such questions. You may rely upon my keeping your counsel, and we shall be delighted if you care to come and stay here for a bit in any case.

May God guide you aright. It's a hard step to take, but looking at the English Church from outside it soon loses its spell!

68

To another Clergyman

July 4, 1912.

The whole question of Orders, for many years before I became a Catholic, seemed to me a secondary one. What I felt was this. If Rome *is* the Catholic Church, it is for her to decide what is necessary for the conveyance of Holy Orders. If a man is not ready to trust

her in such a matter, it is because in his heart he does not believe she *is* the Catholic Church. I felt that I did not trust the judgment of the English Church alone, in anything, though personally I never had any doubt, even when I left, as to my Orders. But I never could conceive of a man who on other grounds believed the Roman claims hesitating to accept and act upon her judgment in such a very technical matter, and I never had a question or a scruple about being ordained after I was received. I do not see how any man could reasonably accept the Roman position, and accepting it, refuse to accept her judgment upon such a point. After all, the question as to what is necessary to convey Holy Orders is a very technical one. The Anglican Church never professed to train their clergy in very technical theology: the Roman Church does. Therefore, *a priori*, I should have been ready to accept the judgment of a Roman theologian before that of an Anglican on so vital a question. Nor should I feel the least disturbed if—say ten years hence—Rome reopened the question and reversed her decision. I should believe I had acted right in accepting her decision at any time; that the whole responsibility rests with her, though I do not think she is ever likely to change her opinions on the subject. You would not think much of the convictions of a Presbyterian who, on other grounds, was convinced that Presbyterianism could not justify her position, but who—as some I know do—believed in his Orders, and who refused to join the English Church because he would not submit to her ordination, though he believed in Anglican claims and had lost, as he said, all faith in Presbyterianism.

The traditional reverence for old beliefs and custom dies slowly—mercifully so, I think, but one is called upon to act reasonably upon a strong conviction that

in time undermines these beliefs, when one is sure that it *is* reasonable and that it *is* a conviction. And it is, I think, the height of unreason to believe that Rome *is* the Catholic Church and not to accept her judgment upon so fundamental a point.

69

To the Same

August 20, 1912.

I only want to write one line to tell you that I do not forget you. I feel so keenly that those who are going through what you must be going through now can get so little help from others—that anything like pressure of one's own opinions, or even one's own experiences, is all intrusion and seems like an impertinence, and yet I don't want you to think that I am not interested or would not very gladly give you any help or sympathy in my power.

May I say just this, on the special point that troubles you. Is it not possible that you may be driven to take a step that, in a way, is the result of all you have hitherto believed, without being able to reconcile it with all God's dealings with you in the past? For myself, I can truly say that it was what I believed as an Anglican that drove me to Rome—to stay where I was seemed to me to stop short suddenly and unreasonably from the conclusions involved in the premises which I had so far accepted. Even to have the succession, does not make the body which has it the Church or a part of the Church. Must one always reconcile God's dealings with us in the past, with that which He asks of us now? I do not think St. Paul felt so. The reconciliation comes rather by experience than logic, and though one may never see any clear way

of reconciling what seems so difficult, one can feel that somehow one has to deny nothing, but one is able to thank God for all that He has done and given in the past, and to know that it was true and real, without explaining it to one's self. It is difficult to explain exactly what I mean and each one has his own difficulties, but I can only say that I never doubted my Orders when I was in the English Church even up to the end, but I felt that if Rome *is* the Church, it is for the Church to decide such a question as the validity of Orders, and I never had a moment's hesitation in accepting her judgment.

There is of necessity in these letters on the Church's claims a certain amount of repetition. Yet the particular angle of vision of the person to whom they were written contributes also something fresh to each. The following letter, written to a lady in doubts as to her position, sums up and brings together several favourite points dwelt on separately elsewhere.

70

February 23, 1899.

You must forgive me for leaving your other letter unanswered; I don't know how it came about, but I will make up for it by writing at once now. I only got your letter to-day, a few hours ago.

I need not tell you, my dear child, how much I sympathise with you in your present state of mind. I can say, I think, without exaggeration, that for ten years the question was never absent from my mind for an hour at a time. I think I know all its intricacies and byeways, and I am only too thankful when I am allowed to help anyone else. I can see, I think, and

am glad to see the best side of the English Church ; it was my lot to live amongst men whose lives were as true and as holy as I believe are to be found anywhere, and certainly the present movement in the English Church has produced multitudes, amongst the laity, of most devout and pious souls. I never feel tempted to say hard things of the English Church ; on the contrary I feel towards her, I think more tenderly than I did when I was in her, as I can now read calmly of the things which jarred upon and irritated me when in the English Church. But, having said all this, it would not be true if I did not add that seeing her as I now do I have not the least remnant of faith in her, as an organisation, or in her claim to be a true part of the Body of Christ. It came to me long ago what an outrage upon Truth, and what a constant dishonour to our Lord, it must be for a body calling herself a Church to allow her clergy to teach as they pleased either that our Lord is or is not present in the Blessed Sacrament. It seemed to me it would be better and more to His honour to insist upon all her clergy denying it than thus treating it, as if it did not matter how one took His words, and the same with Confession and several other things. Such a position seemed to me to be so radically untruthful, dishonest, and a nursery for scepticism. The only thing she is really afraid of and opposes is definiteness, and such teaching as the poor can understand. Yet I was aware that other men, more devout and more learned than I, did not feel all this in the same way, but no answer they gave ever seemed to me satisfactory. Nor could I accept the common answer which maintained that the Prayer Book taught true doctrines, and if the clergy were not true to the Prayer Book it was not the fault of the English Church. It seemed to me much like saying that a country had most excellent laws in the Statute

Books, but was powerless to enforce them. Moreover, of late the bishops have as clearly as possible put themselves in opposition to that party in the English Church to which I belonged, and to which you still belong. Therefore through her legitimate rulers the English Church repudiates the only party in which I for one feel any interest.

Then, again, it does seem to me inconceivable that our Lord means people to belong to a body in which doubt holds so strong a place. One man's leaving her shakes the faith of numbers, and things happen year after year which, to say the least, disturb the tranquillity of faith—yet faith in the Church is a fundamental upon which the whole spiritual edifice of the soul must depend. No doubt many of the statements in the Prayer Book which look entirely Protestant *can* be construed in a more Catholic sense, yet to the ordinary mind they do not read so, and I believe they were drawn up intentionally with a view to the possibility of a more Catholic interpretation. This seems to be contrary to the whole spirit of historical Christianity, which ever sought to state accurately and clearly what she believed and to remove all possibility of doubt.

Now, as to yourself, I would say two or three things.

(1) Of course such a step as you are just now suffering from, your confessor and trusted teacher leaving the English Church, must naturally upset you and set you thinking. I believe God often uses such means for leading people. We are all rightly influenced by those we trust. St. Paul's conversion doubtless shook the faith of many in their position as Jews. At the same time, what convinces one may not convince another, and therefore you mustn't let yourself be *unduly* influenced. He may have reasons that do not convince you, and in the turmoil of mind consequent

upon his act, you may not be able to judge clearly the force of your convictions. Wait, therefore, till your mind recovers its balance, and till you can see things as they are. He, I am sure, would urge you not to act as he has done, *because* he has done it. Your convictions must be strong and sure, and able to hold out against any questionings that may hereafter arise in your mind. Each soul in one sense stands alone, and has to answer for its acts before God. Arguments at this moment may appeal to you with greater force than they would at ordinary times—give yourself time to weigh them calmly and with your soul at peace. Truth does not need precipitation—on the contrary, it is calm, strong, eternal, and therefore can take time to work its way.

(2) Remember, there are two states of mind often not kept clearly apart, as they need to be. It is *one* thing to doubt the English Church, *quite another* to believe in the Roman. All the doubt possible of the English Church doesn't necessarily mean belief in Rome, and without this latter you could not come, you would never have any peace. Rome demands, rightly, an absolute faith in herself; if you have not that, you would be worse off than you are if you came. Therefore, all those things people say so commonly—'Go to Rome (the city) and you'll be cured of any desire to become a Roman Catholic'—I think are quite properly said; for what it really means, I suppose, is, if you do not find the *practice* up to what you expect you'll lose your faith in the system. I should go further and say, if any such arguments weigh with you at all, go to S. America, or anywhere where things are supposed to be at their worst. If irreverence or slovenliness or even badness in the priesthood would weigh with you, you don't believe in the Roman Church. Personally, I can't imagine their weighing with *me* at all.

I believe in the Roman Catholic Church from convictions too strong to be moved by any local scandals, however grievous, and I believe if one has faith enough in Rome to become a Roman Catholic that all such arguments are devoid of the smallest weight. A local scandal would be a very poor reason for leaving the English Church. I left it because my faith in her, as a system, had wholly died out. I became a Roman Catholic because I believed—whatever possible evils might exist in any place—she was the only representative of the Church of the Apostles on earth. By all means, therefore, come to Rome and see all you can see, or go to Spain or S. America, or anywhere you are advised, and if anything you see in any of these places holds you back, it is because you have not faith in the Roman Church strong enough to justify your becoming a Roman Catholic. Personally, I must say the Church in the city of Rome attracts me so intensely that I am afraid it will almost seem cold in England! I know that its effect is different with some other people.

(3) You must not gauge it by the sensible effect of the Sacraments. I have myself had no sensible devotion of any kind since I was received, but I should be sorry to put the Sacraments to any such test. I do know and can bear witness that there are forms of life produced in the Roman Church that the English Church does not even dream of—I mean in many of the strict religious orders. I was amazed at what I saw even in London a few weeks after I was received in this respect. This is the real test of the Sacraments—in individual cases the effect of the Sacraments may be modified by the life of the individual; but in the corporate body no one I think, who knows both the English and Roman Churches, can doubt that the evidence of their reality in Rome is something that the English Church has never produced, and can't

produce. That part of the English Church to which you belong has still the fervours of a first beginning—in Rome all these things have been going on for ages, therefore you may even at first be disappointed at not finding a certain kind of fervour such as you have been used to; but if God leads you to take the step, and if you take it, compelled by your convictions of faith, you will not regret it.

On somewhat the same lines, but with a very individual touch, is a letter to another inquirer.

71

November 18, 1908.

I sympathise with you very much in your trouble. I went through so much myself for several years before I was received that I know something of what you must be suffering, but this I think I can say without exaggeration, that the question was never out of my mind for an hour while I was awake for ten years or more; very soon after I was received it passed away for good, and since then I have never had a doubt or question. Nor, indeed, can I imagine that if Our Lord ever founded a Church it would be very different from the Roman Church as it exists to-day. The English Church, though I loved it, and have still many associations of friendship and kinship with it, and though I take a great interest in its doings and welfare and have nothing but the most kindly feelings towards it—yet from the time of my reception, as a *Church* and religious teacher, it has melted like a cloud, as Newman said:

'I went by, and lo it was gone;
I sought it, but its place could nowhere be found.'

The arguments that we used to support its claims seem those of a mind tangled in a system it desires and strives to be loyal to, and to support by reason with strong and stern facts against it.

Looked at from outside I can truly say, with whatever prejudice the mind may have in its favour rather than against it (so it was with me at least), it seems astonishing that it held me so long.

As to yourself, I think you must keep your mind clear from certain things that may mislead you.

1. There are two states of mind on the subject that are quite distinct:

(*a*) Loss of faith in the English Church.
(*b*) A firm faith that the Roman Church *is* the Catholic Church founded by Our Lord.

I have known of many who took it for granted that despair of the Church of England necessitated a belief in Rome. This is a mistake. Rome stands upon her own claims—they are positive and distinct; if you believe in them you can't believe in the English Church, for her claims are quite incompatible with every belief in Anglican claims. But it's quite possible to lose all faith in the English Church and not to accept the claims of Rome.

This, I think, you will see, but you must keep it clearly before your mind. I should most certainly refuse to receive a person who desired to be received *only* on the ground that he had lost all faith in the English Church.

2. You must try also to keep clearly before you the difference between conviction and any feeling of attraction.

I only learnt this after a long experience of the reaction of the whole mind when facing the step. All

the associations and spiritual experiences of a lifetime may rise in loud protest, while conviction remains unchanged.

The whole of our nature may sweep strongly in one direction while conviction draws in another. The currents are sure to run strongly in the deep channels cut by many years ; it is hard for the will, alone and unaided, to lift itself out of these channels and follow, bare and unaided, the conviction that has only lately and by slow degrees cast its light upon the soul. Often, I think, the force of these currents is so strong that it blinds the mind against the fact, which one only recognises by degrees, that they leave the conviction unchanged. The star of Bethlehem was no doubt often clouded as the wise men followed its leading, and many a time they must have wondered if they were not deluded. I remember a very short time before I was received being overwhelmed with a deep repugnance against Rome and the whole question, and in the midst of the tumult of the rush of feeling and association and desire to stay where I was, looking up, and there was the star of conviction clear and steady above all the battling elements within.

Perhaps all this is already well known to you ; to me it came suddenly and visibly and brought me safely through.

3. Again, you speak a great deal of your spiritual state, of its being at a standstill, etc. But the hope of new spiritual awakening is not enough to lead you to take the step you are considering ; it is undoubtedly true that if you become a Catholic you will have new and great spiritual helps—indeed, I have felt that there is nothing the soul can want that is not provided for it in the Catholic Church, it is in truth a land flowing with milk and honey. But the shock of change can do harm as well as good—a break in the middle of one's

life is a serious thing not devoid of danger; moreover, it may be your lot to find if you become a Catholic that God will plunge you in spiritual darkness. He does do so to many good people. No, you must not let such hopes unduly influence you. . . .

You must act simply upon your conviction: 'It is the Truth, and I must obey it, come what will.'

I have known of many who have deteriorated by becoming Catholics—that does not affect the question 'Is it the Truth?'

You can't make conditions with God. Surely, if you act rightly, God will help you, but if you take the step the result spiritually will depend upon your own earnestness and fidelity.

4. You speak a great deal about the Will of God. 'Is it God's Will that I should go or stay where I am.?' This, I think, is misleading. It is a curious kind of distinction that you make between obeying what you believe to be the Truth and the Will of God.

It is simpler to put the question barely to yourself: 'Do I believe that the Roman Church is the Church of God, and that her claims are true?'

That's the whole question. If you do believe it, it's certainly the Will of God that you should act upon it, if you don't—the question is at an end. It seems to me that you make the Will of God a separate factor, to be considered quite apart from the only question that really exists for you: 'Is it true?' I think people sometimes get their minds contorted by separating between the Will of God and acting upon conviction, saying to themselves: 'Yes, I believe Rome is right, but at the same time I feel as if it is the Will of God that I should stay where I am.' Such an attitude is, of course, self-deception.

To obey the Truth, or what we are convinced is the Truth, *is* to obey the Will of God. And be sure God

will give you no special revelation. You must obey in these matters the conclusion of your reason. Reason leads to the Truth. Faith then comes and makes you certain, suffuses the whole nature with unshaken conviction.

5. Again, there comes the feeling, 'What right have I to take such a step when I have not made all the use I might of the opportunity I have had as an Anglican; I must wait and put these to the very best use possible before thinking of asking for something better.'

Of course the answer is simple—as long as I believe in the English Church I must stay whether I get help or not, but I cannot get any help from a system which I believe to be untrue. Who can look back upon past years without many regrets for unused opportunities? Well, such regrets must stimulate us to do better, but they surely cannot be excuses for insincerity.

You would not tell a person to go on living in schism if he believed himself to be in schism in order to undo past negligence before coming out of schism into the Body of Christ.

6. As to the influence of your friend. Of course you must be careful, but God uses human means for diverse ends. If your friend's influence has led you to consider the question, and has ended in leaving you with the independent conviction that Rome is true and that if she were dead your conviction would remain, then you act independently. I suppose most of us owe some of the best things we have to the influence of a friend.

Now I must stop. I hope something I have said may be a help to you; but at such crises in life I think we can get very little help from others—who can see exactly into another's mind?

If you have as strong a conviction that Rome is

right as would lead you to become a Christian if you were not one, then I think you have enough to act upon. You must go out, in some sense, into the darkness if you act on Faith. There is the feeling, perhaps I shall be disappointed, perhaps I shall find things I don't expect. Well, I can only tell you that I should be sorry to keep back anything from you, or to stretch out a hand to help you to come where you would find what would lead you to regret the step afterwards.

I do not plead for a cause that I have espoused, nor am I particularly anxious to proselytise—you are a perfect stranger to me, I only want to help you. If there is any fear of lurking revelations or discoveries after you take the step, tell me what your fears are and I will truly tell you if they have any foundation in reality. I know of nothing. I have discovered nothing. Many individual Catholics are narrow, many ignorant of what is going on outside the Church, many very uninteresting, many do harm by their proselytising campaign. But the Catholic Church *is* the city of God where the soul finds peace and plenty, and there is a spirit of joyousness and a power of dealing with sin that is not even dreamed of outside.

Another correspondent had asked Father Maturin for some account of his own reasons for taking the step she was contemplating.

72

February 22, 1902.

I should have answered your letter before, but I have been laid up for the last fortnight with influenza.

You need not apologise for writing to me. I can only be glad if my experience can be of any use to

anyone else, and I think I faced the question from most points of view.

You asked me what convinced me that the English Church is not a part of the Church Catholic. It is not difficult for me to answer. It was practically two things:

1. Her isolation from the rest of Christendom, of which she claims to be part. No one recognises that claim except a minority of her own children. The English Church as a whole does not make the claim, only the High Church part of it. Moreover, I could not see what guarantee she could give for the truth of what she taught where she differed from the rest of Christendom. She never claimed to be infallible, yet in many points she differs from the rest of Christendom, whether you take that to mean Rome alone or Rome and the Orthodox East. Why should I believe that in any such points of difference she is right and all the rest wrong?

Why should a few bishops who break away from the rest of the body be protected from error and say, 'We are right, and in these points all others are wrong.'

No doubt it might be so in the nature of things, in the Arian troubles the minority were right; but I think we have a right to ask a small fragment making such a claim to prove by miracle or the extraordinary sanctity of its followers that its claim is reasonable. For instance, from the Fourth Lateran Council, 1214, up to, say, 1549, the English Church in union with Rome taught that Transubstantiation was Divine truth. From 1549 to to-day she has taught that Transubstantiation overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament and is plainly contrary to the Word of God. Why should I believe her for the last three hundred years of separation when she contradicts categorically

her own teaching in union with Rome of three hundred years before? Moreover, since she changed this doctrine she has practically robbed her people of faith in the Real Presence.

Again, apart from all the rest of Christendom she refuses Unction to the dying, though distinctly commanded by St. James. Again she has deprived all her children of the practical doctrine of the Communion of Saints.

Why should I believe her to be right and all the rest of Christendom wrong? Certainly not because of the fruits of this teaching, for the fruits have been such that every High Churchman to-day deplores and tries to remedy them.

If one is to give one's soul to a body to instruct in the way of life, one must have strong reasonable grounds for doing so . . . to my mind it is the height of unreasonableness to commit one's confidence to a teacher of Revelation except that teacher claims and gives good ground for believing the claim that she cannot err in such teaching.

If she claims that she *may* be wrong, that she is not sure of herself, that God has not pledged His own word to protect her, within her own sphere of teaching—why should I believe her? The claim of infallibility is, to my mind, the one ground of reasonable submission. And such a claim with a history of 2000 years open before the public demands much self-confidence in the body that makes it.

This seems to me to overthrow the idea of the possibility of the Church being divided. If it can be divided and one part can't interfere with the other, each part may gradually drift into difference of teaching.

The unity of the Church is necessary for its infallibility—it all holds together: every bishop has the right to interfere with every other bishop if he seems

to depart in any way from the Faith, and at the head of all is the Pope. From a mere human point of view, so closely coherent is the whole Church that it would seem impossible that it should drift from the original teaching.

2. My second point was, that on a matter of fact the English Church *can't* teach at all. She allows you to hold most Catholic doctrines, and she allows someone else to hold every Protestant doctrine. A body one object of whose existence is to teach and who can't teach cumbers the ground. Her commission was: 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations'—that is just the one thing she can't do. Her clergy can teach what they believe as any other clergy can, but all parties quote the Prayer Book, that is the authority of the English Church, and she will not speak, she will not say which represents her. The only foe she has to fear are her own children, and the only reason because she will not tell them which are her loyal children.

I must not write more. Let me say, however, a word on two points.

(*a*) 'Leaving the Church of your baptism.'

That is pure nonsense. You were baptized into the Body of Christ—the true Church, whatever it is. If the English Church is the true Church, every Roman Catholic was baptized into it. If Rome, then everyone everywhere has been baptized into Rome—the *true Church,* whatever it is. If you believe Rome is the true Church, you enter then with heart and reason and faith the Church of your baptism from which heresy and schism hitherto held you back: instead of leaving the Church of your baptism you *enter* it with your own will.

(*b*) The other point is about the exercise of your private judgment.

Your reason and your private judgment were

given you amongst other reasons to lead you to the Truth. . . . I consider such an act the highest and noblest act of the private judgment. The wrong exercise of private judgment is for the individual, having entered the Church, to imagine he can test each separate doctrine and reject or accept what commends itself to him. The true exercise is by the use of reason to find out where that Teacher is of whom was said : ' He that receiveth you, receiveth Me.'

I might say a good deal more, but must stop.

If you are ever in town and care to come and see me talking would be more satisfactory than writing—but if I can help you don't hesitate to write.

The historical side was not Father Maturin's favourite way of approaching the subject of the Catholic Church, but he makes use of it in answer to a correspondent in the following letter.

73

May 20, 1904.

I think your reasons, as you put them, are rather difficulties in regard to the English Church than positive reasons for Rome. I think you have stronger reasons that you have not, perhaps, altogether analysed. The temper of the reformers was odious, I grant, but if the movement itself was right and justified, I think I should not press that. No doubt there were faults on both sides, and it is possible if the Pope had been firmer at the beginning things might have turned out differently. To my mind, those are matters that added their weight to give impulse to the movement, but was the movement right ? If so, the harsh temper, or lack of firmness on the side of Clement, are matters of

regret, but matters that leave the movement itself untouched. Many of the sessions of some of the greatest Councils of the Church were not very edifying ! But we take no heed of that in considering their definitions.

Consider the two Reformations. There were grave abuses no doubt in the sixteenth century—abuses that no doubt had their influence in leading to the Reformation. The English Church claimed the right, apart from the rest of Christendom, to reform herself, and she did so, and you see the result. At the same time Rome reformed herself and got rid of the abuses, while keeping the faith and discipline of the Church intact.

The English Reformation destroyed in the minds of the people the idea of a Church, faith in the Blessed Sacrament, and deprived them practically of confession and absolutely of Holy Unction. The Roman Reformation left the old system intact and swept the abuses away. *Everyone* can see the continuity between the pre-Reformation Church and Rome, only a few prejudiced people can suppose the English Church of to-day to be the representative of the pre-Reformation Church. The question seems to me a broader one than one of being able to sign the Declaration or of valid orders—it is the whole position. One can fulfil our Lord's commission to teach, the other can't ; one can enforce her authority, the other can't, and is not quite certain what her authority is. To say that England and Rome are one is absurd ; the forms of government of the two Churches are different. One is Papal—the Episcopate with the Pope at its head, equally divine in their origin—the other is Episcopal ; they are as different forms of government as a monarchy and a republic. America might as well claim to-day continuity with the Colonial States : she ceased to be English and monarchical at the Revolution, and the

English Church ceased to be the old Church when she changed her form of government, to say nothing of her doctrine, at the Reformation; but I am afraid I am dogmatising.

Have you read Gairdner's Henry VIII, in the 'History of the English Church,' edited by the late Dean of Winchester. Do read it. I feel for you in the throes in which I suffered so long, but I am sure it will end right. Don't hurry yourself by an hour. God will give to your mind a clear and undoubting conviction if He is leading you to the Catholic Church. But as one draws near often the light dies out and leaves one in utter darkness for a time; the mind clings and turns back to its old mode of thought, and the heart yearns after its old associations and all the memories of many blessings in the past—verily, it's like Peter leaving the shelter of the boat and going out into the storm to follow the Voice that called him.

The following especially beautiful letter shows Father Maturin's delicate sympathy and respect for another's mind, and his realisation of the hidden work of the sub-conscious in every mental process.

74

June 27, 1914.

I did not write before as I wished to respect your resolution to keep out of all discussion of the subject that is filling your mind for a month, and I don't know that I have anything very special to say now, except that you may perhaps be feeling what I felt when I was where you are—an intense loneliness, and sometimes a wish that someone could understand; and I want specially to say that I feel great sympathy for you

and remember you daily in my poor prayers, but you have to fight it out alone.

No one can perhaps reach just that personal attitude of mind, with all its traditional way of looking at things, its temperament and greater or less clearness of vision, which shuts each one in within the limits of their own personality.

I should like, if I may, to say one or two things which I learnt in the storm and stress, when I felt as if it was hopeless to expect to be able to come to a definite conclusion one way or the other.

1. There comes a time when there is no use in reading, or indeed in definitely thinking further. Your mind has taken in all it will ever be able to assimilate on the subject; then pray and look up, not in. I should like to give you a passage from Bergson that is very suggestive on this subject. He is speaking of his theory of intuition. He says, 'Anyone who has been engaged in literary production knows perfectly well that after long study has been given to the subject, when all documents have been collected, and all sketches made, one thing more is necessary—an effort, often painful, to set oneself in the heart of the subject and get from it an impulse as profound as possible, when there is nothing more to be done than to follow it. This impulse once received, sets the spirit on a path, where it finds again all the information it had collected and a thousand other details. The impulse develops itself, the further you go on the more is revealed, yet if you turn back to apprehend the impulse you feel behind you, it is hidden from you.'

That impulse in questions of faith is, I believe, partly human, partly divine. It's partly the unconscious outcome of digesting and assimilating all you have read and thought, but it is also partly

divine—'the spirit of the Lord moving upon the face of the waters' and bringing order out of chaos. But the voice of the Holy Spirit is so gentle, so careful never to intrude upon your liberty, never to compel you to a conclusion, that it is only after the decision has been come to that you realise how much you were led, and how great a part He took in making the issue clear.

2. And therefore you must not look for anything strikingly supernatural. You are to be led to the door of the Truth mainly—as it may seem to you, almost entirely—by the guidance of your reason. Waiting for a call, or to know God's Will as people say often, is sometimes a delusion. God's Will is that a person should be reasonable, should not believe truths which are contradictory, etc.; that a person should be truthful and sincere with his own convictions. There is, indeed, the supernatural illumination of faith that makes a synthesis of all the streams of thought that led in one direction, but that may be the crown of the acts of the labour of the intellect and reason.

3. Do not pay any attention to the reaction of feeling—moments when the whole subject becomes abhorrent to you, and you wonder if it wouldn't be better to leave it all alone and go back to where you were. This, I believe, is the last fight between heart and head. It may be that in the end, if you make up your mind to be received, you'll have to do it in cold blood, without an emotion, with an aching heart and a weary brain, only knowing that you cannot longer keep any self-respect without doing it. Those who think you are doing wrong will of course, rightly, try to dissuade you, and bring up sometimes quite irrelevant matter as reason to deter you, such as scandals and abuses and so on; but remember that in our Lord's time the state of the Jewish Church was

pretty low, when Phariseeism was the predominant influence, yet He said, ' Salvation is of the Jews.'

The one and only question is, Is Rome right, is she the Church of Christ ?—and if by God's grace you enter it, I for one can promise you that you will say, ' I was led haltingly and painfully and uncertainly—even at the last I almost went back, but now I know, for I have seen with mine own eyes, and the half was not told me.'

God bless you.

The following letters were written to a lady about to be received into the Church. A busy lecturer enjoying a holiday in France, she had received in one of the great cathedrals a first impulse towards faith in Christianity, but doubted the reasonableness of this impulse. At this stage she came across a book that helped her, ' Problems and Persons.' [1]

The reading of ' Problems and Persons ' was followed by letters to Mr. Ward, asking his advice as to further study, and by him the inquirer was sent to Father Maturin. Her remaining difficulties were solved chiefly in conversation, so that these letters consist mainly of counsel about her reception into the Church and the preparation for it.

[1] By Wilfrid Ward (Longmans). Years later Father Maturin wrote of her to Mr. Ward :

' An exceedingly intelligent lady, who had been brought up in the most advanced modern school of thought and is now a devout Catholic, told me that it was through your books that it first seemed to her an intelligent possibility to become a Catholic. If you will allow me to say so, I think you are one of the few men in England who are in full touch with the thought of the day, and know how to reconcile minds which are entangled in them with the teaching of the Catholic Church without any compromise or minimising.'

75

May 27, 1904.

I have been out of town the last two days or I should have answered your letter before, but it is not exactly a letter to ' answer.' It seems to me wonderful how God has led you on so far ; it must fill you with hope and trust for the future—it strengthens one's own faith to read what you say. You may feel assured that He who has led you so far will lead you on to the full light of His Truth. Those resting-places in the past were but temporary, while your mind and heart were being prepared for something vastly larger and fuller. Will you come and see me, it would be so much more easy and satisfactory to talk than to write, and I can perhaps help to make things clearer for you.

76

To the Same

June 27, 1904.

I think you are quite right to go into every question, and leave no ghosts to come later out of dark corners to disturb your peace. There are many questions, of course, that can't be answered, but I always think the answers given by the Church are less unreasonable than those given outside, when she does give an answer, and please don't imagine a difficulty is looked upon by me as trivial if it doesn't happen to be my own difficulty. The greatest difficulties often spring from having to adjust the mind to new intellectual surroundings ; it feels ill at ease in its new home, and is awkward in moving about and cannot settle comfortably on the new resting-places, which later on it

delights to lounge and rest upon. The *things* are there and they are seen and known and measured and understood, but the *mind* feels strange and awkward in dealing with them.

77

To the Same

July 22, 1904.

My time gets so broken up that I have had very little time to write any letters this week or I should not have left yours so long unanswered. I had meant every day to tell you about the Retreat, September 5th–11th, at Hayward's Heath. It would be a nice time of quiet and preparation if you could manage to come, and the nuns there are so charming and so good that I am sure you would like it, and might later on find it a city of refuge from time to time when work and life became too pressing. One lady I sent there to prepare for her marriage and reception! She quite lost her heart to the nuns. Tell me if you would like it and I will arrange it for you.

As to your reception. *Certainly* go to Chartres. Nothing could be nicer or more fitting. My only hesitation on the point is this. French priests are, I imagine, very technical, and your abbé may expect you to have more technical and detailed instruction than I care to give. You will perhaps have seen that I do not care for such instruction very much, as I always feel it is more helpful to talk round a subject and fill up the lacunæ where there are any, and develop what is already known. *I* feel sure you do know, believe, and understand enough to be received; it is only if you should be asked to answer in catechetical form, whether you would 'rise' to the requirements demanded of you at Chartres. Of course, I may

be quite wrong as to what may be expected of you.

Of course it is a happiness to receive a person whom I have helped to prepare, but such a thing is not to be considered for a moment compared with the consolation and fitness of your going to Chartres—and whether I receive you or not I shall always look upon you as my child, as long as you and I are in London.

78

To the Same

August 13, 1904.

As I leave here to-morrow and go abroad on Sunday evening, I must write a line to-day to answer your questions.

1. There is a little book with a form of Reception used in England ; you could get a copy at Burns and Oates. It's quite a tiny book, as the whole thing is very short.

2. In England a conditional baptism has *no* ceremonies *at all*—it's nothing but the pouring on of water with the words, no prayers, nothing else. The abbé evidently intends to use the long form of adult baptism, which takes nearly one hour. Will you write me a line before the Retreat and I will bring down the book and go over it with you. I am afraid you will not find it in English.

3. As to Confession. It is *customary* to make one's Confession to the priest who receives one—but I am not sure if it's necessary. You see, as long as your baptism has to be given conditionally you could not get absolution till after the conditional baptism, consequently you would, I fancy, have to await your absolution till you return from Chartres, but

I will make sure of this point and tell you at the Retreat. In your general Confession you have to avoid too much detail. It is better, if possible, not to write it, as unwritten it is less formal. If you do make it after the Retreat or in the Retreat, I shouldn't begin to prepare till the Retreat ; it's bad to give too much time to it. I think the general state of your mind is the best preparation for the Retreat. You might say the Veni Creator or the Litany of the Holy Name daily as a more formal preparation.

As to what you have written we will talk it over. You are certainly not bound to get any approval before writing, except for a distinctly religious or theological book. My *feeling* is to let the past alone, unless there has been anything aggressively anti-Catholic, and even so sometimes the best corrective is in the tone of the future, if one writes anything that gives one an opportunity. One wants, above all, to dispel from the minds of intelligent non-Catholics the nightmare that as soon as one becomes a Catholic one is forced to say certain things. Make your friends feel that your mind was never so free or vigorous, that the Catholic Church is not a system of intellectual rigorism, but that the ' Truth makes you free.'

79

To the Same

September 18, 1904.

I only got your letter yesterday, sent on to me from London. I am so glad and thankful that the step is already taken and you have passed ' through the Gates into the City.' May you find in it all that your heart desires. I hope you didn't find it a very great ordeal. I am hoping to hear all your news soon.

I only send this line of welcome and to wish you God speed.

I am afraid you will not get this before Tuesday, as there is no post out to-day.

80

To the Same

October 3, 1904.

Welcome back to London. I should have written but that I felt probably my letter would have to travel about before it could find you, and since I got back from the North I have been very busy.

When will you come and see me? Could you come on Saturday at 12.30? I have no idea when your lectures begin.

It's strange how one's soul passes through great experiences and one plods on in the same round, and no one notices any difference or imagines what one has been through. You will, no doubt, have times of darkness and trouble again. I found, for the first few months, the one thing to do was to keep the door bolted and barred and to refuse to allow any question to enter; then all questions pass away—all such questions, I mean—and give one peace.

God bless you.

The next letter was written from America to the Reverend Mother of an Anglican community, the news of whose reception into the Church had just reached Father Maturin.

81

Easter Day, 1913.

My dear Sister,—I have heard echoes and seen bits of reports of your news and I am thankful to hear it, though I have felt for a long time that you'd come in the end. I have remembered you at Mass and in my prayers often. I expect you have gone through a pretty hard time and that you will still have a good deal to suffer, though I suppose so many coming together makes the wrench somewhat less, or at any rate helps to soothe the pain. I found the solitude and isolation very hard, and find it so still, though in time one feels it is worth everything to see and know the Church from within; but that has only come upon me in time, perhaps more slowly than it will to you. No one knows how hard it is, and how sore and bleeding one feels, and as if all one's bones were out of joint, and I wonder when I read the *Tablet's* jaunty pæans what you and those with you are feeling really. The sense of responsibility for all those others, and the condemnation of those whom you have left behind, and the impossibility to explain or to make others see that, from the beginning, this end was inevitable, though you did not know it; all this must be burden enough without what you must have had to go through yourself. For myself, I can truly say that from the time I recovered my feet, a few months after I was received, never a question or doubt has ever crossed my mind, and I found myself at home almost at once, as if I had been always a Catholic, though I have had, I suppose like most, a good deal to suffer, and like Newman, 'courtesy, but little sympathy.' But perhaps I oughtn't to say this, as I have made many dear and

kind friends . . . and have seen in many families what seemed to me the very ideal of religion.

I gather from what I have seen that you are going to be affiliated to the English congregation, but I don't know any details or how it is to be done. You won't misunderstand me when I say that I hope you will be made to feel the change very thoroughly—through and through—and enter into all the Benedictine ways, ancient and modern, and bring none of the Anglican atmosphere with you, except its 'vital piety,' of which I hope you'll bring a great deal. How I should like to see you and talk over things, but you are no doubt in very good hands. I can imagine no form of religion here on earth more completely satisfactory than the Benedictine; it breathes with the breath and breadth of antiquity, and wherever I have seen it, it certainly has the atmosphere of peace. All that one used to dream of in old days as an Anglican it realises and far surpasses. And it will not let you—if ever you are tempted to it—be controversial or bitter or full of amazement at the folly of all who do not follow you! But I don't think that will be your line. . . .

God bless you and your large family, and guide your barque into the haven of true Benedictine pax.

Two more letters to friends on the verge of reception into the Church show once more his unfailing sympathy and helpfulness. The first of these correspondents had asked him to say Mass for her.

82

November 26, 1906.

Indeed I will, and I am sure it will be accepted. I think there is nothing in the world like mental suffering,

and perhaps no mental suffering like that which comes from having to hurt one's friends. But when that is the condition of testing and proving one's love to God, God must surely accept and bless it abundantly. And He will, and when you have settled down in the richer soil and purer air, you'll feel it.

83

March 6, 1912.

I am very glad to hear that you are to be received to-morrow, and I will remember you at Mass. I hope your reception will bring you many blessings, but you must not, and I am sure will not, expect to see any immediate results—none except a feeling as if one had had one's skin torn off and was left bleeding. Tearing oneself from associations with which one had been bound up all one's life, and which hold all one's best and holiest associations, is not an easy step, and one does not grasp all the consolations till one gets a little healed and soothed—that will come in time. Don't look back, never reopen the question, never analyse your motives, but try to throw yourself into your new surroundings and life. Don't let yourself criticise ways that seem to you not to be as good as those you have been used to, and don't be scandalised at the quiet ways, instead of a good deal of the enthusiasm you have had where you were. You are coming into a system that has gone on over 2000 years without a change, that has converted the world, that does not lay itself out for bright services, etc., but has the strength to house and shelter the world against the assaults of unbelief, and I believe no other body has. In a year or two you'll be singing your Te Deum—to-morrow you'll possibly be sore and worried as to

whether you have done right; but you have, and it will all come flooding your soul with peace and consolation in time—but wait and be patient, be strong, and put your trust in the Lord and He will bring it to pass.

God bless you, and please say one earnest prayer for me to-morrow.

Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. Ltd.
Colchester, London & Eton, England.

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